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VANCOUVER metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Obama visits an old friend

Eager to reassure an anxious ally, the U.S. president promises Israel to do whatever is necessary to keep Iran from obtaining nuclear arms PAGE 15

Sound and vision

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Are we really that bad?

Vancouver places a lowly 52nd on MoneySense's best places to live in Canada ranking — ouch! PAGE 3

FEMININE FOR FALL

DESIGNERS THINKING FULL SKIRTS, TEXTURED FABRICS AND GIRLY-GIRL PATTERNS FOR NEXT SEASON PAGE 31

Open coast guard station or no pipeline: Premier to feds

Canadian Coast Guard spokesman Dan Bate said via email that the Kitsilano base was not an environmental-response resource and that that capacity in Vancouver remains unchanged by the base's closure. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

Ultimatum. More tanker traffic in B.C. would require beefed-up coast guard response, says Premier Christy Clark

KATE WEBB
kate.webb@metronews.ca

B.C. Premier Christy Clark has an ultimatum for the Harper government: no Kitsilano Coast Guard Station, no expansion of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline.

She made the comments Wednesday while responding to two federal announcements made this week aimed at calming British Columbians' fears about new oil-pipeline projects from Alberta to the B.C. coast, and discussing her five criteria for supporting any of them.

The Kitsilano base was shuttered a month ago despite strong opposition from all provincial political parties, saving the federal government about $700,000 a year.

"If they're closing down coast guard stations at the same time that they're saying they want to improve our coast guard capacity, the two just don't make sense beside each other," Clark said.

"It sounds to a lot of people like what they're saying is different from what they're doing, and that poses a real problem for the expansion of heavy oil in British Columbia."

On Monday in Vancouver, Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver announced $120 million in new funding over five years for "world-class" tanker safety investments.

The premier said that is a good first step, but more coast guard stations, not fewer, will be required before the province will consider any proposals that would increase tanker traffic in B.C.

Kinder Morgan's proposal, expected to be filed late this year, would boost tanker traffic leaving Vancouver's port from 32 per year to 408.

"When they get to the outcome it's going to have to include making sure that Kits Coast Guard base is reopened," Clark said.

Canadian Coast Guard spokesman Dan Bate said via email that the Kitsilano base was not an environmental-response resource, and that that capacity in Vancouver remains unchanged by the closure.

The primary response agency for oil spills in Vancouver is the Western Canada Marine Response Corporation. The coast guard has the responsibility to monitor their response in the event of a spill and is able to assist them using two pollution-response vessels. One of those was stationed at the Kits base, but both are now stationed in Steveston Harbour.

Kinder Morgan said via email that the matter is between the premier and the federal government.

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TV filming

Taped raid violated rights, BCCLA says

The BC Civil Liberties Association is alleging that the Canada Border Services Agency broke federal laws when it allowed a TV series to film a raid on a Vancouver construction site last week.

The BCCLA will file a complaint to the federal privacy commissioner claiming the CBSA violated a migrant worker's human rights by allowing the incident to be taped for entertainment purposes.

Oscar Mata Duran has already been deported after being caught in the raid. His questioning by the CBSA was taped for the TV series without his consent, according to the BCCLA.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Marine response

Spill ship hits hiccup en route to photo-op

File this under oops: The largest oil-spill response ship along B.C.'s coast ran aground on its way to an appearance at a news conference in Vancouver on Monday.

According to Western Canada Marine Response, Burrard Cleaner No. 9 ran into a previously uncharted sandbar off Sand Heads.

A WCMR spokesperson said the incident caused no damage and was reported to Transport Canada.

The ship, with engines powered down, drifted off the sandbar within minutes.

Allan Hughes of the coast guard's marine-communications union said it's "astonishing" that the feds were touting the ability to deal with oil spills without noting how long it took for the best response boat to get to the area.

The trip across the Strait took just over seven hours, but WCMR stressed the ship was travelling much slower than in the case of an emergency. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Does this look terrible to you? Vancouver placed 52nd in MoneySense's ranking of Canadian cities. ERIC DREGER/FOR METRO

Best place to live? We're not even close

MoneySense. Vancouver ranked 52nd best location to call home in Canada

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Just as Vancouverites were starting to feel even smugger about our metropolis, a new ranking could wipe the smirks off our faces.

Vancouver placed a lowly 52nd on MoneySense's list of best places to live in Canada, which emphasizes quality of life based on income and housing, one day after the city was crowned the global Earth Hour capital.

Calgary placed first (NHL teams weren't a factor in the ranking), followed by St. Albert, Alta., and Burlington, Ont., on the listing of 200 cities.

Although Vancouver is accustomed to top-five showings on international rankings by the Economist and Mercer, it's no wonder it sank below Saanich and Regina on a list that values affordability above all.

"Vancouver, while breathtakingly beautiful, is less than ideal for anyone on a budget, which is most of us," MoneySense explained in a post.

The list pegged Vancouver's average house price at $882,000, yet citizens' average household income of $81,066 fell in the middle of the pack. (If you're looking for a higher salary, the richest folks live in Wood Buffalo, Alta., and make $183,684 on average.)

While Lotus Land did well in categories such as biking to work, warm weather and people employed in arts and recreation, it faltered when it came to unemployment and crime rates.

City council has attempted to address the affordable-housing issue by making it easier to build dedicated apartment buildings and encouraging developers to build social housing along with condos. But critics say the problem is only getting worse with gentrification of low-income neighbourhoods.

MoneySense admits that its rankings, based on hard numbers, don't account for immeasurable qualities that Vancouver loves to brag about. It may be a different story if it had judged the natural beauty of the mountains, the fit yogis wearing sheer Lululemon pants or the concentration of coffee shops.

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B.C. Premier Christy Clark says new federal investments in tanker safety indicate Ottawa is listening to her demands on the controversial issue of oil pipelines. EZRA SHAW/GETTY IMAGES

After two federal announcements were made this week aimed at addressing B.C.'s reservations about proposed oil pipelines, Metro checked in with Premier Christy Clark to see how close the feds and companies are to satisfying her five criteria for support.

KATE WEBB/METRO

5 Points on the premier's pipeline-criteria report card

1 Successful completion of environmental review

CC's take: Not complete
"If (the Northern Gateway) fails its environmental-approval process, it stops there. We will give it zero consideration," the premier said. "If it passes, it's met one of the five conditions that we've set in place."

2 World-leading marine oil-spill response, prevention and recovery systems

CC's take: Moving in the right direction
Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver announced $120 million for new tanker-safety investments in Vancouver on Monday, but Clark said more will have to be done.

"I'm glad that the federal government is moving, is deciding to come some way to meeting British Columbia's conditions on this, because it goes to show what happens when you stand firm," she said.

3 World-leading terrestrial spill response

CC's take: Not yet convinced by Enbridge
While the province is preparing to host a symposium on this topic next week, Clark said Enbridge has not been particularly convincing during the Joint Review Panel hearings that their pipeline technology will be 100 per cent spill-proof.

"They're continuing to revise their proposal as it goes along, so it may continue to improve," she said.

4 Address aboriginal concerns and treaty rights

CC's take: Better to start late than never
On Tuesday, Ottawa appointed Douglas Eyford as Canada's special representative to engage aboriginal communities on West Coast energy infrastructure.

"I think that's a very positive move," the premier said. "I'm glad they've been listening to British Columbia, because we've been saying this for over a year now: You cannot build pipelines across the north without First Nations being consulted."

5 B.C. must get a fair share of the benefits

CC's take: The buck stops here
Clark says it goes without saying that companies and governments need to ensure British Columbians aren't on the hook for any costs of a spill. But beyond that, she still insists B.C. must get a share of the profits or jobs from these projects — or both.

"It's funny — I talk to the federal government; they say go talk to Alberta and they'll give you some of their benefit," she said.

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RCMP Sgt. Jennifer Pound pauses for a moment during a news conference at RCMP headquarters in Surrey on Wednesday. Inset: Rachel Pernosky. THE CANADIAN PRESS/JONATHAN HAYWARD; INSET: MISSION B.C. RCMP HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS/

Mission teen mom found dead

Rachel Pernosky. Homicide team investigating the murder of mother, 18, who was reported missing late Saturday

Those who knew British Columbia's latest murder victim say the 18-year-old had a laugh "that could brighten anyone's mood."

Rachel Pernosky was reported missing from her home in Mission by her family late Saturday night.

Her body was spotted Tuesday evening, tossed down a steep embankment in Chilliwack, about 44 kilometres away from her home.

A search-and-rescue team was called in to retrieve Pernosky's body after a passerby saw it from the road above and called police.

Quoted

The father of the child is "not a suspect."

RCMP spokeswoman Sgt. Jennifer Pound at a news conference Wednesday. The baby is currently in the custody of his biological father, Pound said

The discovery came after days of exhaustive searches by family, friends and police.

"She was 18 years old; she was a mom herself of a very young child," RCMP spokeswoman Sgt. Jennifer Pound said at a news conference Wednesday. "This has left a hole in her family and it's left a little boy without a mom," she said. "If anybody has any information, we're asking them to please come forward."

An avid user of social media, friends and family became concerned Saturday after Pernosky's Facebook and Twitter accounts fell silent.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

No cash commitment

Premier will mull plans for Penticton hospital upgrade

Premier Christy Clark isn't committing any cash to upgrading the aging and outdated Penticton Regional Hospital but she says the Liberal government is ready to talk about possible renovations.

A news release issued Wednesday says Clark's willingness to consider plans for a new patient-care tower shows the Liberal government is listening to south Okanagan residents.

Hundreds of people have packed recent meetings, demanding immediate improvements to the hospital. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Appeal. Supreme Court rejects woman's request in impaired-driving case

The Supreme Court of Canada has rejected a British Columbia woman's request to appeal her drunk-driving conviction involving the death of a four-year-old girl.

Carol-Ann Berner was found guilty after Alexa Middelaer was killed and her aunt was severely injured in May 2008, when they were run down by a car while feeding a horse on a rural road.

In November 2010, Berner was sentenced to two and a half years in prison and banned from driving for five years. She appealed.

The B.C. Court of Appeal previously ruled that the trial judge considered the results of Berner's breathalyzer tests and the expert evidence of the RCMP's forensic alcohol specialist in ruling the woman's ability to drive was impaired by alcohol.

Berner appealed on several grounds, including that the Insurance Corp. of B.C. disposed of her car before she was charged and the police accident reconstructionist made errors in measuring and analysis.

As per its custom, the high court gave no reasons Wednesday for dismissing her request for leave to appeal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Joining forces. Unions, enviros turn up political pressure for 'green jobs'

B.C. environmentalists and labour unions have joined forces in a campaign to convince provincial party leaders to include "green jobs" policies in their election platforms.

"We are launching the campaign calling on the leaders to adopt a bold green jobs plan to employ tens of thousands of British Columbians while taking significant action with regards to climate change," said Darryl Walker, president of the B.C. Government Employees Union, one of 60 organizations and businesses that have expressed support for the GreenJobsBC initiative.

The campaign focuses on creating green jobs — or "greening" existing jobs — in the forestry, energy, transportation and construction sectors.

Opportunity

"Climate change is big and frightening and it's going to bring all kinds of negative impacts on our world. But in stepping up to that challenge there are opportunities."

Lisa Matthaus of Organizing for Change

These four sectors offer the most "low-hanging fruit", according to Lisa Matthaus of Organizing for Change, a coalition of environmental groups promoting the initiative.

TYLER HARBOTTLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS, EXCLUSIVELY FOR METRO

Gabriola Island. Car races across ferry deck and into water

CMP believe there was a lone driver in a car that slammed through a metal gate, roared over an open ferry deck and plunged into the water, but so far they have not found a body.

A recovery operation underway off a BC Ferries dock on Gabriola Island, B.C., Wednesday turned up the vehicle submerged under more than 35 metres of water.

"We had search and rescue go out to make a patrol of the beaches to see if we could locate anybody from the vehicle, a driver," Sgt. Sheryl Armstrong said.

"We can't confirm if there was passengers, we know for sure there was one person involved."

BC Ferries CEO Mike Corrigan says the situation prompted the RCMP to call in the navy for help accessing the vehicle.

"It's a very sad situation, it was a six-foot barrier gate there, a metal barrier gate that this vehicle rammed through at a high rate of speed," Corrigan said in an interview.

The incident happened at about 3:45 a.m. Wednesday. The MV Quinsam ferry had been "home ported" at the Gabriola Island dock and wasn't due to resume service for a few hours. The small island is located about five kilometres east of Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Explosion

Prince George forest mill to be rebuilt

A sawmill destroyed by a deadly blast in Prince George last year will be rebuilt.

The Sinclar Group Forest Products company says final design plans haven't been completed, but it intends to rebuild the Lakeland Mill, with construction expected to begin this spring.

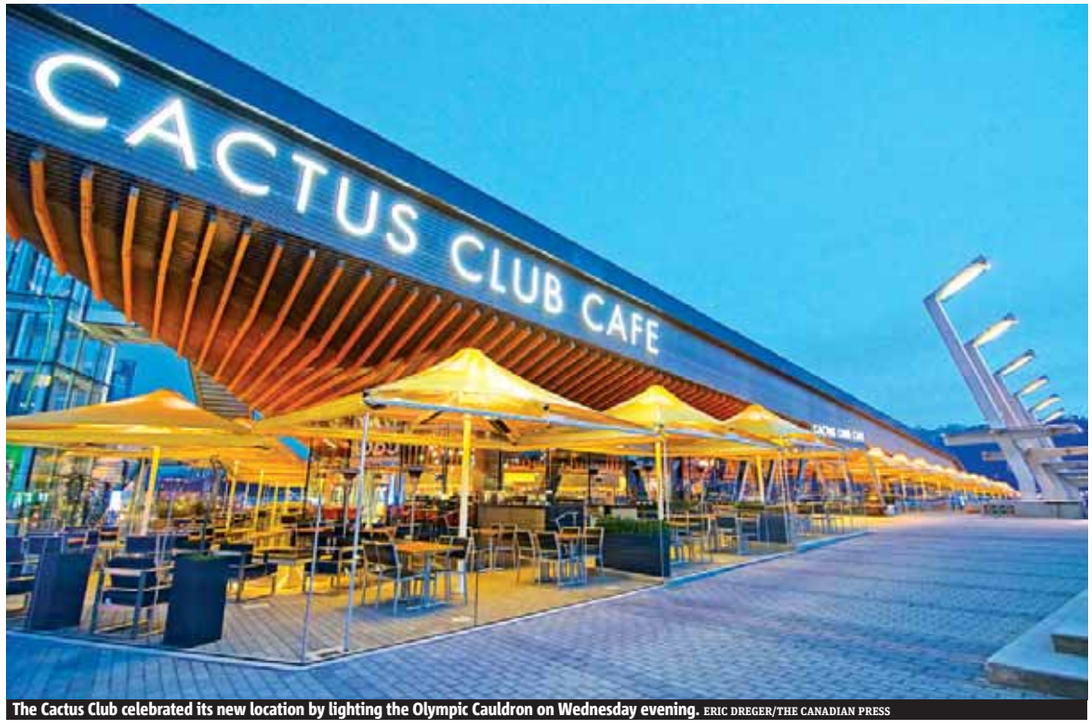
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hammer as a weapon

Mountie draws gun in tense Vernon incident

A 52-year-old North Okanagan man is expected to face charges of uttering threats and assault after a tense confrontation with police during which a Mountie drew his gun.

The suspect, brandishing a hammer, advanced in a threatening way, according to police, but luckily the officer switched to pepper spray. THE CANADIAN PRESS



The Cactus Club celebrated its new location by lighting the Olympic Cauldron on Wednesday evening. ERIC DREGER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cactus Club lights Olympic Cauldron

Foodie favourite. Symbolic lighting part of celebrating the restaurant's new 'iconic' location

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

The Cactus Club opened its new location with a gesture usually reserved for the Vancouver Olympic Games, Canada Day celebrations, Remembrance Day and large conventions — the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron.

Flames will light the cauldron for four hours at Jack Poole Plaza where the 23rd Cactus Club location opened its doors Wednesday evening.

It will cost the restaurant at least $5,250, including a 5 per cent administration cost, for the technicians at FortisBC to keep the cauldron ablaze, according to Vancouver Convention Centre spokeswoman Jinny Wu.

A plaque on the cauldron states it "will be lit to celebrate major achievements and events," and Wu confirmed it has been done from "time to time" since the 2010 Winter Games.

The symbolic lighting is all part of celebrating what Cactus Club founder and president Richard Jaffray hopes will become an "iconic" location for tourists and residents alike.

Restaurant jobs

2,100

Richard Jaffray's restaurants employ 2,100 people in B.C. in 20 locations.

"I think it's going to become one of those spots in the city that you just have to visit," Jaffray said Wednesday, pointing to the excellent views of the North Shore where his first Cactus Club launched 25 years ago.

Much has changed since Jaffray opened the first location, which has fewer seats than the new restaurant's patio.

When he first opened, he wouldn't have believed foodie favourites tuna tataki or beef carpaccio would ever grace his restaurant's menus. Now, he's exporting his brand of casual dining to Toronto with plans to open the first Ontario location in 2014.

"We've been part of the food scene here in Vancouver and the whole evolution in the area of casual fine dining," he said, pointing to the high-end food but the casual atmosphere. "I think that whole blend is very unique to B.C."

Abiding law 'torture' for ill patients: Lawyer

Forcing sick patients to suffer through painful, agonizing deaths without the ability to ask a doctor to help them end their lives is akin to "torture," a lawyer told the British Columbia Court of Appeal on Wednesday as he argued for the legalization of physician-assisted suicide.

Joseph Arvay, who represents several plaintiffs in a case that saw the law struck down last year, said the ban on assisted suicide leads some patients with terminal illnesses to end their lives early, because they know they won't be able to seek a doctor's help if they become debilitated later.

He said the federal government is forcing those patients to make a cruel choice between suicide and suffering.

"The choice for those people is, if they comply with the law, they will suffer, and for some of the people the suffering could be tantamount to torture," Arvay told a three-judge appeal panel.

"So they're given the choice: torture or early death. And some people will take the early death, because they were driven to that choice by the law."

The appeal stems from a landmark decision out of the B.C. Supreme Court, which ruled last year that the federal law banning doctor-assisted suicide is unconstitutional.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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‘Just watch me’ be PM: Trudeau

Scribbled reply. Liberal leadership contender echoes father’s words

The confident reply. CONTRIBUTED/IMGUR.COM; INSET: FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Forty-two years after it was first uttered, the Trudeau challenge is back.

“Just watch me,” Justin Trudeau scribbled in a note on Tuesday night, when a fellow passenger on his flight, Michael Kydd, asked whether the Liberal leadership contender could defeat Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Trudeau replied by invoking his father’s famous phrase during the FLQ crisis of 1970, when a band of Quebec separatists kidnapped a British diplomat and a cabinet minister.

Then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau was asked how far he would go in the suspension of civil liberties during the crisis.

“Well, just watch me,” he said at the time.

It turns out Kydd will be “just watching” Trudeau, however. Kydd acknowledged he’s a lifelong Conservative.

Harper’s communications director, Andrew MacDougall, was having some fun, too, by putting out his own scribbled note on Wednesday. A photo was posted on Twitter with a question: “Hey Andrew, what do you think about Justin Trudeau’s ‘just watch me’ quote?”

The reply: “Fuddle Duddle! Andrew.”

(“Fuddle duddle” was what Pierre Trudeau claimed he said during a stormy session in the Commons. Others said it was a well-known obscenity.)

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

‘Ugly’ politics. Commons speaker forced to break up partisan name-calling

Things certainly got a bit ugly in the House of Commons.

With Opposition accusations flying over the resignation last week of Labrador MP Peter Penashue, Prime Minister Stephen Harper again heaped praise on his former intergovernmental affairs minister.

Harper told the Commons he expected the Conservatives would run a clean campaign in a byelection in which Penashue has pledged to run.

But he also suggested the Liberals were already running a “negative, ugly campaign” against Penashue.

That prompted an exchange with interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae, with the Commons speaker forced to break up the verbal melee.

Rae told the House the Conservatives had only to look in the mirror if they wanted to see ugly.

Penashue resigned his cabinet post and his seat in the Commons last week after Elections Canada found his election campaign had accepted 28 ineligible donations.

The PM continues to back his former intergovernmental affairs minister. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

He has since pledged to run in a byelection and is being supported by the prime minister, even though Elections Canada is continuing to investigate.

The opposition parties have accused Harper of acting immorally by allowing Penashue to run in a byelection after being caught “buying” his last election.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

$2.4-billion hike

Nuclear waste spikes deficit

A sudden $2.4-billion revision to Canada’s nuclear liabilities has crept up on Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and substantially deepened the deficit for the current fiscal year.

Atomic Energy of Canada quietly announced Tuesday night that the expected long-term cost for disposing of nuclear waste has risen. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Human rights

First Nations bring record complaints

First Nations communities brought a record number of complaints last year to the Human Rights Commission.

Its annual report attributes the surge to a 2008 law change that allowed aboriginals to complain about matters under the Indian Act. Then in 2011, they were allowed to complain about their own First Nations governments.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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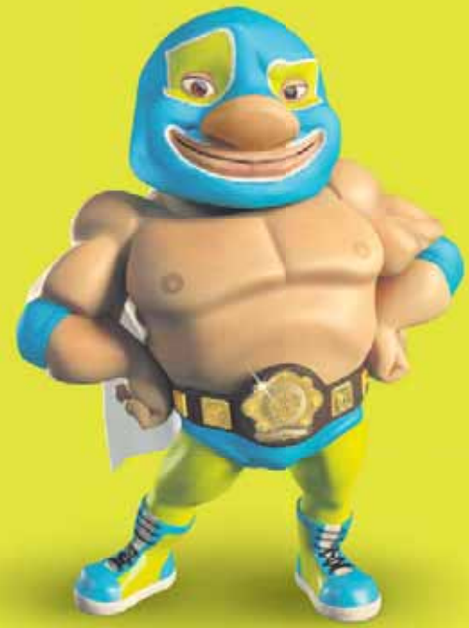

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IVF. Research goes into 3-person fertilization to prevent genetic diseases

Britain's fertility regulator says it has found broad public support for in vitro fertilization techniques that allow babies to be created with DNA from three people for couples at risk of passing on potentially fatal genetic diseases.

It also found there was no evidence to suggest the techniques were unsafe, but said further research was still necessary.

Critics, however, slammed the decision as a breach of ethics, saying there were already safe methods like egg donation to allow people to have children without mitochondria defects.

Britain's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority began a public discussion of the topic at the government's request last year.

"Although some people have concerns about the safety of these techniques, we found that they trust the scientific experts and the regulator to know when it is appropriate to make them available to patients," Lisa Jardine, chair of the group, said in a statement Wednesday.

British law forbids altering a human egg or an embryo before transferring it into a woman, so such treatments are currently only allowed for research. Similar research is going on in the U.S.

About one in 200 children every year in Britain is born with a mitochondrial disorder. Mistakes in the mitochondria's genetic code can result in serious diseases.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Genetic-disease research

"The sole aim (is) preventing a potentially fatal condition from being passed down to the next generation."

Marita Polschmidt, director of research at the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign

All smiles with Baby on Board

The Duchess of Cambridge smiles at the Queen after she receives a "Baby on Board" badge. It's available to pregnant passengers on London's Tube to let others know they may need a seat. The Royals were celebrating the underground's 150th anniversary. MATT DUNHAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OMA. Ontario doctors want crackdown on antibiotic use in farming

The Ontario Medical Association wants the federal and provincial governments to crack down on antibiotic use in farming.

The organization is issuing a call to arms on the problem of antibiotic resistance, warning the world is in danger of losing these drugs because of misuse.

A policy paper drafted by the OMA says Ontario should ban the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in food-animal production.

Farmers currently feed antibiotics to healthy animals both to prevent them from becoming ill and to accelerate growth.

Many more tonnes of the drugs are used in agricultural operations than in human medicine and experts say the practice is fuelling development of resistance.

OMA president Dr. Doug Weir says Canada has been slower off the mark to act to protect antibiotics than countries in Europe and the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has barred the disease-prevention use of a class of antibiotics called cephalosporins in animal production, but the practice is not banned in Canada.

The OMA says governments should close loopholes that allow farmers to import the drugs. THE CANADIAN PRESS

'A serious problem'

OMA president Dr. Doug Weir says Canadians do not appear to understand that if antibiotic use isn't curbed, the world faces a future in which some infections will be incurable.

- The OMA wants access to antibiotics for agricultural operations to be limited to cases where veterinarians write prescriptions. Currently, farmers use the drugs without surveillance.

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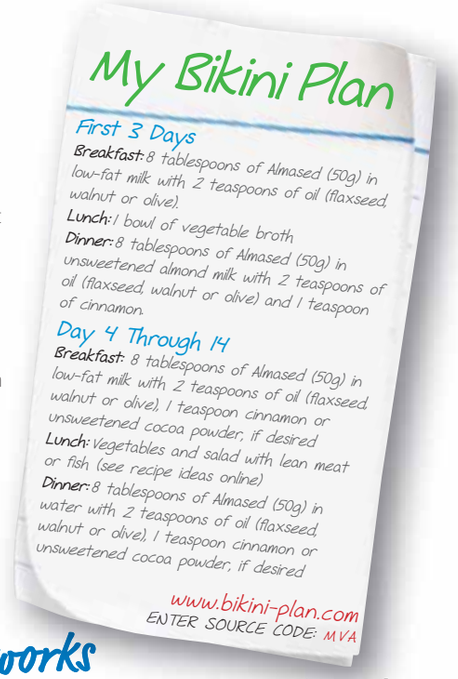
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Networks crash at S. Korean banks, media companies

Cyber attack. North Korea suspected of being behind the attack that paralyzed ATMs across South Korea

An employee works near a monitor with an error message at the Seoul newsroom of all-news cable channel YTN after the South Korean broadcaster's computer network was paralyzed on Wednesday. Networks at major South Korean banks and top TV broadcasters all crashed en masse. YONHAP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A cyber attack caused computer networks at major South Korean banks and top TV broadcasters to crash simultaneously Wednesday, paralyzing bank machines across the country and prompting speculation of North Korean involvement.

Screens went blank at 2 p.m., the state-run Korea Information Security Agency said, and more than seven hours later some systems were still down.

Police and South Korean officials couldn't immediately determine responsibility, and North Korea's state media made no immediate comments on the shutdown. But some experts suspected a cyber attack orchestrated by Pyongyang. The rivals have exchanged threats amid joint U.S.-South Korean military drills and in the wake of UN sanctions meant to punish North Korea over its nuclear test last month.

The network paralysis took place just days after North Korea accused South Korea and the U.S. of staging a cyber attack that shut down its websites for two days last week. Loxley Pacific, a Thailand-based Internet service provider, confirmed the North Korean outage but did not say what caused it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2011 massacre

Norway sets $19M to fight terror

The Norwegian government has pledged an extra 109 million kroner ($19.4 million) this year to improve terror preparedness following the July 22, 2011 massacre in which a right-wing extremist killed 77 people in a bomb attack and shooting rampage.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

N. Korean weaponry

Republican fears East Asia arms race

A senior Republican lawmaker, pushing for tougher U.S. banking sanctions on North Korea, says the isolated nation's development of a nuclear weapon could trigger an atomic arms race in East Asia. House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Ed Royce said Wednesday that South Korea, Japan and Taiwan might seek nuclear weapons if Pyongyang miniaturizes a nuclear warhead it can mount on a missile. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Getting to the heart of the matter

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Normal Triglyceride Levels ☐	Elevated Triglycerides ☐	Allergies ☐
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Regime, rebels call for probe of alleged chemical attack

Syrian civil war. Both sides blame each other for the incident without offering clear proof

Syria's government and rebels on Wednesday both demanded an international investigation into an alleged chemical-weapons attack, as the country's feared arsenal became the latest propaganda tool in the two-year-old civil war.

President Barack Obama said the United States is investigating whether chemical weapons have been deployed in Syria, but noted that he is "deeply skeptical" of claims by President Bashar Assad's regime that rebel forces were behind such an attack.

Syrian girls paint their faces with colours of the Syrian revolutionary flag during a festival in Aleppo, Syria, Wednesday. AMC/ALEPPO MEDIA CENTRE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Once we establish the facts, I have made clear that the use of chemical weapons is a game changer," Obama said in a news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem.

The use of chemical weapons by either side is a nightmare scenario. Along with its warnings about Assad, the West is just as concerned that rebel forces, including some linked to al-Qaida, could get their hands on Syria's chemical-weapons supplies.

Despite the importance, any clear confirmation of the nature of the attack that took place Tuesday in the northern village of Khan al-Assal, killing at least 31 people, is unlikely. Syria's government seals off areas it controls to journalists and outside observers.

If confirmed, it would be the first time a chemical weapon has been used in Syria's war that has already killed an estimated 70,000 people.

Syria's UN Ambassador Bashar Jaafari called the attack "very serious and alarming and unacceptable and unethical." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tensions with Iran. Obama pledges support for Israel

Eager to reassure an anxious ally, U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday promised to work closely with Israel and do whatever is necessary to keep Iran from obtaining nuclear arms, "the world's worst weapons."

Obama, meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his first visit to the Jewish state as president, said of Iran's nuclear ambitions: "We prefer to resolve this diplomatically and there is still time to do so." But he added that "all options are on the table" if diplomacy falls short.

Netanyahu, at Obama's side for a joint news conference, said that while he appreciated U.S. efforts to thwart Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons through diplomacy and sanctions, those tools "must be augmented by a clear and credible threat of military action."

Seeking to alter a perception among many Israelis that his government has been less supportive of Israel than previous U.S. administrations, Obama declared the U.S.-Israeli alliance "eternal." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu after a joint news conference in Jerusalem, Wednesday. CAROLYN KASTER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egypt

Judges suggest dissolving Muslim Brotherhood

A panel of judges has recommended the dissolution of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist group from which President Mohammed Morsi hails. The recommendation is significant given charges that the Brotherhood is the real power behind Morsi. The recommendation was made to a high administrative court expected to rule this month in a case over the Brotherhood's legitimacy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ban lifted

Jews of Egypt film to air in cinemas

The director of a documentary on Egypt's Jewish community says authorities have lifted a ban on showing the film in local cinemas. The Jews of Egypt follows the lives of the community in the 20th century. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Federal Budget coverage that adds up.

TODAY, starting at 1 pm

Turn to CBC News for LIVE coverage of the 2013 Federal Budget with Evan Solomon and Amanda Lang on CBC-TV and CBC News Network, Alison Smith on CBC Radio and live streaming on CBCNews.ca

Later, Wendy Mesley hosts The National, bringing you all the highlights and reactions. Plus, the At Issue panel breaks down what the budget means for you.

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‘We’re going to stop these pipelines’

First Nations. Aboriginal groups say stakes are so high, they’ll keep fighting Keystone XL and Northern Gateway

An alliance of First Nations leaders is preparing to fight proposed new pipelines in the courts and through unspecified direct action.

Native leaders from Canada and the United States were on Parliament Hill Wednesday to underline opposition to both the Northern Gateway and Keystone XL pipelines.

The first would tie the Alberta oil sands to the West Coast, while the second would send bitumen to refineries on the American Gulf Coast.

Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver said the federal government is consulting with First Nations and is ready to hear their concerns.

“We’re making every effort to respond to the concerns we have heard on the West Coast,” he said after a caucus meeting.

“They want to do the best for their communities and we want to do the best for their communities as well. So I remain very hopeful.”

Some of the chiefs brushed off the federal government’s appointment this week of a special envoy to look at tensions between natives and the energy industry.

Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation said natives are determined to block the pipelines.

“It’s going to be a long, hot summer,” he said at a news conference.

Phil Lane Jr. of the American Yankton Sioux said native groups south of the border will stand with their Canadian cousins.

“We’re going to stop these pipelines one way or another,” he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Save the earth

“We’re the ones that’s going to save whatever we have left of this earth.”

Chief Martin Louie of the Nadleh Whut’en First Nation in northern B.C.

Phil Lane Jr., of the American Yankton Sioux Nation, says native groups south of the border will stand with their Canadian cousins in their protest of Northern Gateway and Keystone XL pipelines. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Teen football players

Girl, 13, taunted in sexual assault case

Two members of the Torrington, Conn. High School football team have been charged with sexually assaulting a 13-year-old girl, who has been taunted on social media sites in recent weeks by dozens of classmates upset at the allegations.

The Register Citizen reports the two 18-year-old football players, Edgar Gonzalez and Joan Toribio, have been charged with felony second-degree sexual assault and other crimes in an investigation that began last month. Both have pleaded not guilty.

The newspaper reports social media posts by classmates taunting the accuser have been vulgar, blaming her for ruining the players’ lives. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Targeted? Shooter kills head of Colorado prisons

Colorado’s top state prison official was shot and killed when he answered the front door of his house, setting off a hunt for the shooter and raising questions about whether the attack had anything to do with his job.

Tom Clements, 58, was shot around 8:30 p.m. Tuesday in Monument, north of Colorado Springs, and a witness reported a person driving away in a dark-coloured “boxy” car that had its engine running at the time of the shooting, authorities said.

Investigators were exploring all possibilities, including that the shooting could have been related to Clements’ job as executive director of the Colorado Department of Corrections.

While the motive of the killing wasn’t immediately clear, similar attacks on officials have been on the rise in the U.S., said Glenn McGovern, a California investigator who tracks such incidents worldwide.

The attacks are often motivated by revenge, said McGovern, who has documented more than 133 attacks since 1950. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Wrongfully accused? N.Y. prosecutors ask judge to free convicted killer

A man put behind bars for the 1990 killing of a Brooklyn rabbi was on the verge of freedom Wednesday after prosecutors told a judge they support tossing out his conviction.

David Ranta was to appear Thursday in state court, where a judge will rule on a defence motion to vacate his second-degree murder conviction.

Based on its own re-investigation of the case, the Brooklyn District Attorney's office filed papers on Wednesday supporting the motion. They also told the judge they want the murder indictment dismissed, since they "no longer have sufficient evidence to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt."

If the judge agrees, the 58-year-old Ranta could walk out the courtroom Thursday afternoon as a free man.

On Feb. 8, 1990, Rabbi Chaskel Werzberger, a leader of the Satmar Hasidic community, was shot in the head by a man fleeing a botched robbery.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Catching a kingpin

Jamaican residents demand justice for deadly 2010 raid

Residents of a battle-scarred slum once controlled by Jamaica's biggest underworld boss rallied Wednesday to demand accountability and justice for a deadly 2010 raid into their community that failed to catch him.

Demonstrators marched to Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller's offices. Most were from Tivoli Gardens, a public-housing complex in Kingston once run by Christopher "Dudus" Coke, where at least 73 civilians were killed when security forces conducted an offensive during a state of emergency. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

State's offer of aid to gun maker pulled 4 days after shooting

Newtown, Conn.
School killings appear to be a secondary factor in ending deal

Just days before 20 children and six educators were killed at a Connecticut school in December, state development officials offered the maker of the rifle used in the massacre a $1-million loan to bring new jobs to the state.

The offer, capping six months of negotiations between the Department of Economic and Community Development and Freedom Group, was dropped after private-equity firm Cerberus Capital Management announced it would sell Freedom Group, manufacturer of the Bushmaster AR-15.

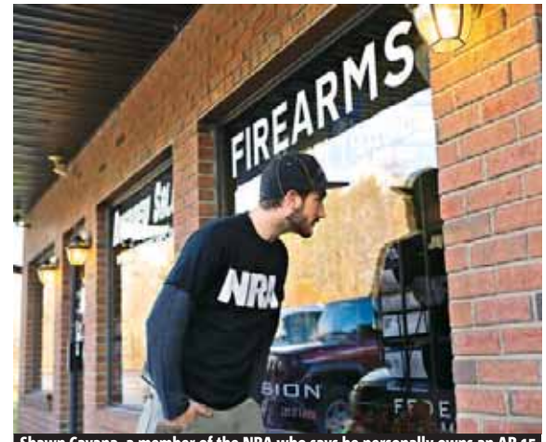
The deal was ended four days after the killings, according to a letter released in response to an open-records request.

The deal

In a Dec. 6 letter — eight days before the shootings at Sandy Hook — the administration of Gov. Dannel P. Malloy offered a $1-million loan at two per cent interest for 10 years to encourage gun maker Freedom Group to move its corporate headquarters to Stamford, Conn. from North Carolina. The state would forgive $550,000 in exchange for the creation of 25 jobs.

The Hartford Courant first reported the deal.

Deputy agency commissioner Ronald Angelo said Wednesday that Cerberus' announcement made the deal untenable. The announced sale led to several "cordial, amicable" phone conversations between the state and the company about the deal no longer being workable. He said the killings also were a factor.



Shawn Cavana, a member of the NRA who says he personally owns an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, looks into the Riverview Gun Sales shop while gun shopping with friends in East Windsor, Conn. JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

"It would be naive to think that that would not weigh on people's minds," he said, referring to the shooting deaths.

Days after the killings, investors started to avoid some of the nation's largest gun makers. Cerberus Capital Management announced it would sell the maker of the rifle used in the massacre, which it called a "watershed event."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Witness draws federal parties into Quebec corruption inquiry

No followups.
Questioning about donations of fake-billing proceeds to parties leads to federal level

Quebec's corruption inquiry has heard that illegal political financing happened beyond the world of provincial politics and also permeated the federal level.

The issue, briefly raised on Wednesday at the inquiry, was vaguely addressed and immediately dropped.

An engineering executive was describing how he used fake-billing schemes to funnel cash from his company to parties as illegal provincial party contributions.

Then, when asked whether he used that practice to contribute to federal parties, Rosaire Sauriol, vice-president of Dessau Inc., replied, "Yes."

And that was it. There were no more details about which parties might have received the cash, how much they received or when they received it.

The mandate of Quebec's corruption inquiry does not extend to the federal level — so any questions about politics beyond the province are deemed out of bounds.

But Sauriol's answer is enough to raise questions about whether federal parties were financed with illegal cash and, if so, which ones. There have been limits since 2004 on corporate donations to federal parties; corporate donations were banned entirely in 2006.

The events that Sauriol has been describing in his testimony occurred as late as 2009.

While testifying on Wednesday, Sauriol said his company gave more than $1 million to provincial parties between 1998 and 2010 — about 60 per cent of it to the Liberals and 40 per cent to the Parti Quebecois. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rosaire Sauriol, vice-president at Dessau, is seen in a screen grab from a video feed as he testifies in Montreal on Wednesday at the Charbonneau inquiry looking into corruption in the Quebec construction industry.
CHARBONNEAU COMMISSION/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Widening scope

More than provincial

Wednesday's brief exchange was a rare example of the inquiry tiptoeing, however gingerly, beyond the confines of Quebec provincial politics.

The inquiry has also twice raised the name of Sen. Leo Housakos — although he has not been accused of any wrongdoing.

At one point this week, an inquiry lawyer suddenly began asking the head of another engineering firm, BPR, about the senator's work and the company, and his appointment to the upper chamber of the Parliament of Canada. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Marijuana. Dispensary partners with rapper

A Michigan medical-marijuana centre is partnering with a member of the Grammy-winning rap group Bone Thugs-N-Harmony to cultivate and distribute a new strain of medical marijuana.

The Green Oasis and Stanley "Flesh-N-Bone" Howse have agreed to work together on "Phifty Caliber Kush," which they say has a noticeable floral taste and is an effective pain reliever.

The Flint-area dispensary's owner, Anthony Butler, calls the new pot strain "the best of the best."

Besides distributing "Phifty Caliber Kush," the Green Oasis could begin selling merchandise and possibly host a visit by Howse.

Michigan voters approved marijuana for some chronic medical conditions in 2008. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A jar of Green Oasis' "Lemon Sour Diesel" medical marijuana.
THE FLINT JOURNAL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Anti-whaling 'pirates.' Founder eludes arrest

The founder of Sea Shepherd left the environmental group's fleet of anti-whaling ships before they docked in Australia on Wednesday, though the government says it has no reason to arrest him at the moment.

Three Sea Shepherd ships docked at the southern port of Williamstown after weeks of harassing Japanese whalers in the Antarctic Ocean during the annual whaling season.

Based in Washington state, the organization, which the United States' largest federal court last month labelled "pirates," had left the fleet before it reached Australia for fear of arrest. Watson's whereabouts have not been disclosed.

Watson, a 62-year-old Canadian, is wanted by Costa Rica on charges that he endangered a fishing vessel crew in 2002. He fled from Germany in July after being arrested at the behest of the Costa Rican government.

But Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus told Parliament that Watson would not have been arrested on setting foot on Australia because no Australian arrest warrant existed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wanted man in Japan

Interpol's website says Paul Watson is wanted by Japan for "hooliganism/vandalism/damage, life and health."

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BlackBerry co-founders. $100M fund established for quantum computing

BlackBerry co-founders Mike Lazaridis and Doug Fregin have established a $100-million fund to commercialize quantum computing, an emerging field they say could revolutionize information technology.

They say the Waterloo, Ont., region could be a focal point for new jobs and new industries, much as California's Silicon Valley became a hub for advances in conventional computing.

Lazaridis and Fregin collaborated to found the company formerly known as Research In Motion Ltd. in 1984, which became a leading high technology company through its pioneering efforts in smartphones.

Fregin, 53, retired from RIM in 2007. Lazaridis served as co-chairman and co-CEO until last year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Social media giants ignoring Canadian privacy laws: Report

Personal data. Sites are supposed to let users know what information is being collected about them — but they rarely do, a researcher says

LUKE SIMCOE
luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

Many of the most prominent social media companies are failing to comply with Canadian privacy laws, says a new report.

The study, authored by University of Victoria researcher Chris Parsons, found sites like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr are "lacking at best, and entirely negligent at worst," when it comes to things like letting users know what kind of information is collected about them.

A University of Victoria researcher notes that while some social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, do provide automated ways for users to access their personal data, they do not let users see all of that information. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Schedule 1 of Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) requires social networking sites, upon request, to hand over information about "the existence, use and disclosure of ... personal information."

However, when Parsons and his colleague filed such requests, only six of the 18 companies queried even responded, and those that did either refused to provide any information or offered incomplete data.

While Google, Facebook and Twitter do provide automated methods for users to access their information, Parsons says users are still unable to get all of their personal information. In particular, he and his colleagues found they weren't given the "metadata" that companies attached to their social media posts.

"We argue that metadata is content," he said. "And when we understand the metadata, we can understand how corporations and law enforcement use that data."

Flaherty should have kept nose out of mortgage rates, Tory minister argues

Not everyone in the Conservative cabinet is backing Jim Flaherty's latest intervention in the mortgage market.

Small Business Minister Maxime Bernier says he believes the finance minister overstepped his bounds by having his office phone Manulife Financial and ask they withdraw their discount on five-year mortgages to 2.89 per cent from 3.09.

Bernier told reporters Wednesday he would not have done it. "Me, personally, I would not dictate to businesses what prices to decide," he said. "It's the market. It's supply and demand that decides the prices. It is the case for interest rates, it is the case for other products too."

Dissension in the ranks

"Me, personally, I would not dictate to businesses what prices to decide."
Small Business Minister Maxime Bernier

In the House of Commons, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair asked which minister — Bernier or Flaherty — speaks for the government. "Which minister has the prime minister's confidence, the minister of small business or the minister of finance?"

Prime Minister Stephen Harper did not respond directly but did appear to echo Flaherty's justification for intervening. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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People pass by a closed branch of Laiki Bank in Nicosia, Wednesday. The decisive rejection Tuesday of a plan to take a slice of all deposits above 20,000 euros (about $26,500) has left Cyprus's bailout in question.

PETROS KARADJIAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cypriots scramble to find Plan B

Dire straits. Rejection of a plan to raid people's bank deposits has left the country's bailout plan in doubt

Banks in Cyprus will not open before Tuesday at the earliest as government officials try to find a new plan to stave off financial ruin, the central bank's spokesperson said.

The cash-strapped lenders have been closed since Saturday, when Cyprus said it would raid bank deposits to help fund its bailout package.

Cypriot officials are looking for alternative ways to scrounge up the 5.8 billion euros ($7.51 billion US) that the country's euro area partners and the IMF expect in order to loan another 10 billion euros.

Finance Minister Michalis Sarris is in Moscow seeking help from Russia, including an extension on a loan extended in 2011.

Representatives of Cyprus' potential international lenders — the IMF, European Central Bank and European Commission, known as the troika — met with the country's president and other top officials to discuss the next steps.

An official said the troika was pressing for the country's two top lenders, Laiki and the Bank of Cyprus, to be shut down definitively. The official said there was no Plan B yet.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yahoo buys another small startup to bring 5 ex-employees back to the fold

Yahoo has bought Silicon Valley startup Jybe so it can bring back five of its former engineers to help the Internet company build better mobile applications.

The deal announced Wednesday marks Yahoo's fourth acquisition of a small startup during the past five months. In each instance, Yahoo been more interested in obtaining the startups' brainpower than the services that they provided.

Jybe's mobile service that gathered people's recommendations about food and entertainment is closing down so its five employees can focus on other projects at Yahoo Inc. All five Jybe workers were formerly employed at Yahoo before the company hired former Google Inc. executive Marissa Mayer as its CEO eight months ago.

The recent acquisitions are part of Mayer's effort to bring in more expertise in designing mobile applications

After focusing on nothing but small acquisitions under Mayer's command, Yahoo may be working on something bigger. Earlier this week,

The Wall Street Journal reported that Yahoo is in preliminary discussion to buy a controlling stake in online video site Dailymotion from France Telecom SA.

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IT'S PRIME TIME FOR TV

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Sure, people are killing each other a lot these days, the economy always seems on the verge of collapsing, and the shrinking of chocolate bars continues unabated.

But you can't get me down, because this is the Golden Age of Television.

No other medium can compare. The Beatles came out with every style of pop music in the '60s, and musicians have been trying to catch up, copy or pay tribute ever since.

Movies peaked in the 1970s, when you could go watch The Godfather without being bombarded by tie-ins like a McBrando Triple Burger Combo complete with toy (Bullet-Riddled Sonny).

And the Internet, despite containing the total sum of human knowledge, hasn't figured out yet how to be more than society's porn stash.

But, ah, television. Television is in its sweet spot.

From masterpieces like The Wire and The Sopranos to epic works in progress like Game of Thrones and Mad Men, the last decade of television makes everything that came before it seem like Amateur 44 Minutes.

Just think: There was a time when people arguing the most complex character on television had to decide between Jed Clampett and Hoss Cartwright.

There was a time when the most impressive woman on television was Mary Tyler Moore because she had a job (!) and could throw that hat a lot higher than people believed possible with scrawny female arms.

There was a time when spoilers were only required for big summertime cliffhangers, like Who Borgified J.R.? It wasn't really required for, say, Home Improvement. ("This week, Tim Taylor (WARNING: SPOILER AHEAD) gets his wife mad at him and talks it out with Wilson. We'll discuss the repercussions of this shocker and what it means for the next 11 seasons.")

You can also see how far TV has come if you imagine current shows as old-style programs. "On a very special episode of Game of Thrones, Daenerys Stormborn has a heart-to-heart with her dragons when they take up smoking. King Joffrey enters a skateboarding competition, much to his mother's dismay. And Taylor Swift guest stars as Lady Diva Chanteuse, of House Brokenheart."

We can't even complain about bad television — and there's lots of it — because it's so easy to avoid now. Good TV is there for the buying, renting, streaming or downloading.

For the first time in its history, television has joined the best books and movies in rewarding an active mind. And we should grasp it while we can, because if popular culture has taught us anything, it's that the good stuff never lasts.

Whether this Golden Age of Television is a byproduct of our inability to deal with real-world wars, poverty and lack of chocolate on a planet that is spinning inexorably out of control is a question I will think about eventually — like, when Game of Thrones is over.

Shhh ... TV's on.

ZOOM

An artist within the animal

Works by four-legged, fin-footed and scaled creatures on display

Briana Velazquez and Christian Venegas look at footprints on canvas by the El Paso Zoo's elephants Tuesday inside the Asian Discovery Center.

Through Sunday, Texas' El Paso Zoo will be featuring the exhibit, called Color Coated, of paintings made by snakes, elephants, seals, meerkats and a few other creatures.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARK LAMBIE/EL PASO TIMES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A piece of artwork done by Ibu, a Sumatran orangutan, seen at the El Paso Zoo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

If you happen to be one who tweets
But shrug at the jokes that you read,
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@TheLimerickKing:
What do progressives now think
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These fools are a joke
For thinking a Coke
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@Twitmericks:
There is quite an old Argentinian
Who has a new global dominion
The pontifex Francis
Had previous chances
But now won the conclave's opinion.

I also like this pope-related one from @Twitmericks:
There was an old fellow in Rome
In a church with a bloody big dome
Who said that's enough
Of this papacy stuff
I'm going to veg out at home

Comments

RE: Lululemon Pulls Yoga Pants Off Shelves For Being Too Revealing, published March 19

These pants are made in Asia and sold here for arms and legs! I'll never ever buy these ... the fake ones make my tush look just as nice! We all know people don't buy them for yoga ... C'MON!
Too_Sense posted to metronews.ca

Any publicity is good publicity, this is nothing more than a stunt.
jordangreen posted to metronews.ca

Some people DO buy them for yoga. Not everyone is a poser. It is not that surprising that so many people pose as fitness buffs by wearing the clothes they wear. There are always knock-offs, and that's cool, but the reality is they were designed to do a job. It should be OK if the byproduct is that it is also sexy. Why is that such a problem? Isn't it up to the buyer if the clothes are too revealing or not?

Man, this is so messed up, I would be inclined to think it is at least in part publicity. Another "wardrobe malfunction" LOL.
Ron Davies posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

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The Verdi/Wagner Bicentennial concert by the Vancouver Bach Choir runs Saturday at the Orpheum. SUBMITTED

These guys are still a big deal

Verdi/Wagner Bicentennial.
Speaking to minds and hearts, 200 years on

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

I'm not big on birthdays (so, please, no presents this year), but I'll make an exception for the bicentennial celebration of legendary composers Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner.

Verdi, born in a tiny village near Busseto, Italy, penned some of the most popular operas of all time, including Aida, La Traviata and Rigoletto. Wagner, born in Leipzig, Germany, wrote Lohengrin, The Ring Cycle, and Tristan und Isolde.

Great works, guys. And, seriously, you don't look a day over 185.

Anyway, come celebrate their respective 200th birthdays with a dramatic programme of choruses and arias presented by the Vancouver Bach Choir.

"Both were born in 1813 and, through opera, became musical heroes in their respective nations," says VBC's musical director Leslie Dala.

"Italy's Verdi penned works about humans that spoke to the heart. Germany's Wagner created tales of gods and heroes that were steeped in thought. Two-hundred years later, their works are some of the most celebrated and frequently performed operas in the world."

The celebration will feature the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and soloists from the UBC Opera Ensemble. Also on the programme: scenes from La Traviata, Il Trovatore, Rigoletto, Lohengrin, Tannhauser and Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg.

The Verdi/Wagner Bicentennial takes place Saturday night at the Orpheum (884 Granville St.).

Tickets cost $25 to $59, available online at vancouverbachchoir.com, by phone at 604-696-4290 or at the Orpheum Theatre Box Office (open Monday to Friday from 1 to 5 p.m.).

We're all getting old

It's Barney Bentall and the Legendary Hearts' 25th anniversary show (hey, at least they're not turning 200). The gig goes down June 8 and tickets ($32.50) go on sale tomorrow at 10 a.m. at live nation.com.

Summer lovin'

It's only March but it's never too soon to start planning your summer concerts. The Burnaby Blues and Roots Festival goes down Aug. 10 and features Blue Rodeo, Charles Bradley, ZZ Ward, Shakura S'Aida, Ndidi Onukwulu, David Gogo, The Sojourners, and many more. Tickets are available at burnabybluesfestival.com or the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts Box Office (604-205-3000).

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David Bowie brings music to the movies

Contribution to cinema. The enigmatic musician has only had a few leading roles, but his CV is teeming with small, memorable supporting turns

MATT PRIGGE
Metro World News in New York

Movies have been kind to David Bowie. Where the tradition is for cinema to crush pop star hubris — just ask Madonna, Britney Spears and Mariah Carey — the one born David Jones has eked out a select but excellent filmic existence.

He's only had but a few leading roles — most notably 1976's The Man Who Fell to Earth — but his CV teems with small, memorable supporting turns: a cucumber-cool Pontius Pilate in The Last Temptation of Christ, a spot-on Andy Warhol in Basquiat, a movie-stealing Nikola Tesla in The Prestige and a deeply affecting performance as a dying vampire in the incoherent hot mess that is Tony Scott's The Hunger. (He's also very good as a co-lead in Nagisa Oshima's Japanese POW saga, Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence.)

It's too bad Bowie doesn't enjoy film acting. He's admitted finding movie sets to be artistically fallow, consisting of so much waiting around that he finds himself uninspired. (He hasn't acted in a film since a small role in 2008's August.)

But movies have also been great to his music. Yes, there are only about a thousand uses of Under Pressure. But other movies use his music in more creative ways.

In honour of The Next Day, Bowie's first album in more than a decade — and his best in ages — here's a smattering of Bowie's aural contributions to cinema.

David Bowie isn't a fan of acting. GETTY IMAGES / ALL OTHER PHOTOS ARE HANDOUTS

Christiane F (1981)

Christiane F (Vera Christine Felscherinow) achieved fame when her life as a teenage heroin addict in West Germany became the non-fiction bestseller Christiane F — We Children of Bahnhof Zoo.

It then became a low-budget movie by Ulli Edel (Last Exit to Brooklyn, The Baader Meinhof Complex). A depressing film about teenage drug addiction might not have been a big draw, but it had an ace up its sleeve: David Bowie contributed songs and appeared as himself in gratuitous concert footage.

Because the film was set in the late '70s, the music hails from his Berlin Er a and you get Helden, the German version of Heroes. Today the film is perhaps best known as a soundtrack in the David Bowie section of music stores.

Cat People (1982)

Paul Schrader's remake of Val Lewton's no-budget chiller about a woman who thinks she'll turn into a killer panther when sexually aroused is heavy and awesomely insane.

It saves its most poetically ridiculous moment for the end, which employs the slower, moodier version of Bowie's Cat People — also used to great effect in Inglourious Basterds — over a freeze frame of a sad panther face.

This holds for an entire verse before Schrader unpauses it for the song's chorus, then freeze frames it again!

Labyrinth (1985)

The movie where Bowie, made up to look like a leopard in big '80s hair, plays a puppet king who wishes to marry a 15-year-old Jennifer Connelly. When she refuses, he does the next logical thing: kidnaps her baby brother and forces her to trawl through a puppet-laden maze. It's also a part-time musical. Screenplay by Terry Jones!

Boy Meets Girl (1984)

Filmmaker Leos Carax is big again thanks to Holy Motors, but once upon a time he was the enfant terrible of French cinema and one of the major practitioners of the music video-heavy "cinema du look."

In his feature debut, Carax went to some of Bowie's earliest, when he was an incorrigible unknown cranking out whimsical Anthony Newley-esque songs. The result, a sequence set to the languid When I Live My Dream, is a lovely, lyrical moment capturing the pleasure of walking around Paris with Bowie booming in one's ears.

Lost Highway (1997)

Bowie's 1995 album Outside is one of his better latter-day works, and two of its songs were put to excellent use in two excellent movies.

Seven got Heart's Filthy Lesson, while David Lynch's comeback film — after the disastrous and unfairly maligned Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me, which featured a bizarre cameo from Bowie — opened with the (literally) driving I'm Deranged.

The Runaways (2010)

Dakota Fanning's Cherie Currie first exhibits her rock star prowess by lip synching and gyrating to Lady Grinning Soul while decked out in Aladdin Sane gear. That doesn't sound amazing when typed out, but it is.

Mauvais Sang (1986)

Carax reached for his Bowie stack again for his sophomore effort — an arty neo-noir in which philosophical crook Denis Lavant (the shape-shifting star of Holy Motors) is in love with moll Juliette Binoche.

His passions manifest in a scene where, upon hearing Bowie's Modern Love on the radio, he runs top speed down a deserted city street at night, the song booming at 11. It's the most accurate portrayal of unbridled happiness caught on film and, like most moments of unbridled happiness, it's much too short.

Dogville (2004)

Lars Von Trier's twisted homage to Our Town aims to be an indictment of America, in which strangers are first welcomed and then exploited by a cruel society. To drive this point home, he ends the film with a montage of photos of American devastation and blight set to Young Americans. Von Trier did the same thing with the sequel, Manderlay.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower (2012)

Once upon a time, when you heard a song and you didn't know what it was, you might spend years, decades even, trying to hunt it down.

Set in the distant past of the early '90s, this much-liked YA picture handily depicts an era of irritating ignorance: our heroes hear Bowie's Heroes — the Wallflowers cover, from the soundtrack to 1998's Godzilla, had not yet emerged — are immediately blown away (because it's Bowie's Heroes), but don't figure out what it is until much later in the movie. Good times.

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Lily Tomlin. Actress was ready to bare it all in the name of feminism

Lily Tomlin says like her character in Admission, she's a feminist. HANDOUT

Admission is a romantic comedy, not an action movie, so it comes as something of a surprise that one of its stars wanted to advertise their physique with a scene in which they chop wood bare-chested in the forest. Even more surprising? That star was comedy legend Lily Tomlin. "I wanted to be in the woods chopping wood with my shirt off," Tomlin reveals about her character, a septuagenarian feminist whose adult life has been devoted to activism. "The character has a double mastectomy, and I think, I'll get a breastplate made like I've had a double mastectomy and I'll tattoo it to show another expression of her empowerment and how she's completely at ease with herself and accepts her female body."

Unfortunately, the actress landed the role too late to be able to follow through on her plan. But even without the requisite hardware she wanted to bare her body on screen, she reached into her own experiences in order to bare her character's soul. "I am a feminist and I lived in those days of the movement," Tomlin explains. "And I know what it is as a human [to believe] in a certain philosophy or some doctrine — and you do not want to betray it."

Fey has an admission to make about school

Princeton pass over. Filming latest project brought up memories of rejection for comedian and writer

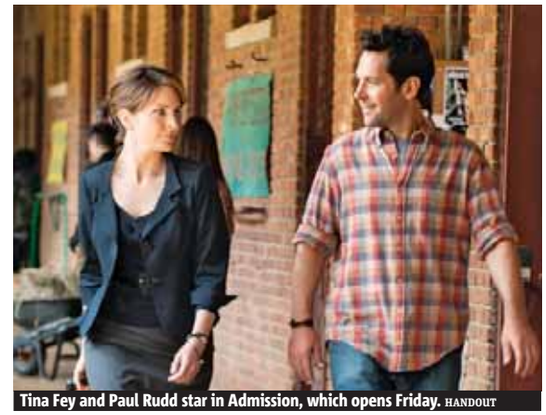
NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Playing a gatekeeper deciding who does and doesn't get into Princeton in Admission brought some long-buried memories to the surface for Tina Fey. "It did remind me that I had actually applied to Princeton and had been rejected, but I felt OK about that," says Fey, who earned her bachelor's at the University of Virginia. "I didn't get mad when I was shooting on the Princeton campus. It was fine."

In fact, Fey credits her Pennsylvania upbringing for sparing her from much of the Ivy League anxiety forced upon other teenagers. "I wasn't growing up in some kind of private-school world where it was expected of you to try to get into an Ivy League school," she says. "I think there are people who grow up in a family where it's like, 'If you don't get into Harvard or Yale or Princeton, you're done!' I think that's craziness."

Though she made a name for creating her own characters — most notably Liz Lemon on 30 Rock, Fey came to Admission primarily as an actress. "I thought the character of Portia was interesting because I hadn't seen a movie about this world of college admissions before, and it is a world that's filled with so much anxiety and therefore humour for people on all sides of it," she says of her attraction to the project.

"I also liked that she's an adult and she is intelligent, and at the same time she still has this huge, explosive emotional thing happen in her life. I also thought it was an interesting story that you see these characters who are chasing motherhood and in pursuit of motherhood, and this is a character who decidedly did not want to be a mother but because of the given circumstances has to cope with the idea that maybe she is."


Tina Fey and Paul Rudd star in Admission, which opens Friday. HANDOUT

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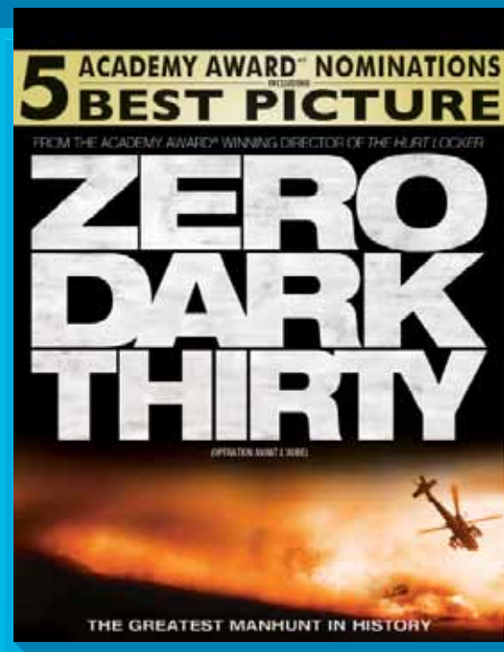
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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Naomi Watts. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Naomi Watts digs deep with words on plastic surgery

Naomi Watts isn't ruling out plastic surgery as an option, but she does worry it might limit her job prospects.

"Never say never — and I certainly don't judge anyone who does it — but most of the characters I play are going through some kind of emotional turmoil, so my job requires me to have expression," Watts tells Australia's Good Health magazine. "If my face was frozen, what right do I have to play that part? All the women who haven't (done) anything to their faces are still able to play great roles. And some of the ones who have done something have messed it up — they look freakish. Anyway, for me it's about playing women with rich lives. And the longer the life, the deeper the wrinkles."

The Word

James Franco couldn't care less if you don't like what he does

James Franco has caught flak for his myriad film and art projects he's launched and academic degrees he's pursued, but he's not letting the haters get him down.

"Criticism can sting but not for long. At this point I've heard it all, good and bad. I can take anything," Franco tells Bullett magazine. "If anyone wants to say that my doing these things makes me a jerk, that's not about me — that's about people reacting to me. I don't need to be liked for anything I do."

He continued on about his haters and why they react the way they do.

"I put out a lot of different kinds of material, and maybe people read that as egotistical. Or maybe, since a lot of it does involve some aspect of me, they find it self-aggrandizing. But there's a long tradition of artists using themselves."

Twitter

@katyperry
About to watch Wayne's World. For the first time...

@MARLONLWAYANS
You don't have to figure life out... It has its way of figuring itself out

@SethMacFarlane
In pre-production for A Million Ways To Die in the West. My horse hasn't kicked me yet, but he did say he hates Family Guy past season 3.

Pink cares about all her fans, no matter how young.

Pink stops show to help little girl

Pink certainly knows how to keep the peace. The singer halted a recent Philadelphia concert when she noticed a little girl in the crowd crying, according to Us Weekly.

"Is everything OK right? Is this little girl all right? Why is she crying? Why is she upset?" asked Pink, who was informed by audience members that an altercation had upset the young girl. "Because there was a fight? You all are fighting around a little girl?" she asked.

Pink then coaxed the girl on stage and gave her a treat.

"Honey, do you want this frog and this Rice Krispies treat?"

Before getting back to the music, she also had a message for the rest of the crowd.

"Are we OK now? Cut it out, y'all. We're grown-ass women."

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Fall into fashion's future

After four gruelling fashion weeks — New York, London, Milan and Paris — we distilled the biggest themes that came down the runways. Here's what you can expect to wear next autumn.

TINA CHADHA
Metro World News

Back to black

As far as New York goes, one message was clear: fall is going to be all about wearable clothes. And let's face it, nothing in your wardrobe is more versatile than black. It's no surprise then that the classic shade ruled the runways. Pair black items with white for another key trend.

SEEN HERE: RAG & BONE

Plays on texture

Forget clothes in plain wool or cotton — designers used luxurious textured fabrics such as high-shine pony hair, wooly alpaca, sophisticated tweed and quilted leather to add a layer of interest to their fall looks.

SEEN HERE: LANVIN

Menswear inspired

Borrowing from the boys has been popular for the past few seasons. Designers furthered explored the trend for fall with slouchy, loose suiting.

SEEN HERE: BLUMARINE

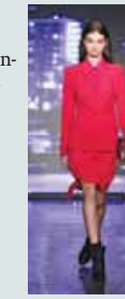
Oversized coats

Besides the tremendous amount of fur on the runway (is PETA still doing their job?) there was another overwhelmingly ubiquitous outerwear trend: coats in oversized proportions and exaggerated cocoon shapes. Squeezing into a crowded subway in one of these is going to be fun.

SEEN HERE: ROCHAS

Pink gets its day

The colour pink gets a bad rap as an uncool girly-girl shade — but that's about to change. Come fall, expect to see stand-out items in every permutation of pink ranging from soft blush to bold fuchsia.



SEEN HERE: DKNY

There's a lady in the house

For those of you who don't do androgyny, feminine staples such as peplum tops, full skirts with longer hemlines and pencil skirts with cinched jackets gave collections a polished, lady-like feel.

SEEN HERE: ROCHAS

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Plaid and checks

Whether you go '90s grunge a la Saint Laurent or the more formal route with houndstooth and Prince of Wales check as shown at Tommy Hilfiger, expect to be part of the plaid parade come Fall.

SEEN HERE: SAINT LAURENT

Winter white

People anxious about getting side eyes for wearing white in the cold seasons can finally put that fear to rest. Designers showed full looks in dreamy pale shades.

SEEN HERE: GIAMBATTISTA VALLI

High slits

Are all the safe, wearable clothes putting you to sleep? Skirts and dresses with slits up to there added a sexy jolt to the fall shows.

SEEN HERE: GIVENCHY

Embellishments galore

This never really ever went out of style. But this show season, the decoration was especially in-your-face with shimmer on top of crystal on top of metal on top of feathers. No matter what your trimming of choice is, there was an option to choose from on the runway. **SEEN HERE: BURBERRY**

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Easter decor goes beyond cute to chic

Fuzzy chicks and cute bunnies are part of the pastel pantheon of Easter decor, and their charm helps define the look of the season. But for those who prefer celebrating with a modern esthetic, there are many attractive decor options that are a tad less cute and a tad more contemporary. Some reference Easter's traditional colour palette in new ways, while others put a modern twist on the holiday's iconic elements.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stuffed felted bunnies and chicks

Canadian textile artist Cristina Larsen crafts winsome stuffed felted bunnies and chicks in a rainbow of hues that have a terrific design-y vibe.

"I use merino wool to make all my felt. I dye the colours and stitch every toy by hand," she says. While Larsen calls them "toys," they'd be equally at home as artsy Easter decor. etsy.com/shop/textileplatypus.

Martha Stewart Living Easter decor

There are some other clever decorating ideas on Stewart's website for those with a slightly crafty hand, like studding wreaths and Styrofoam balls with dozens of pussy willow catkins. Use eggs in interesting ways. You'll find instructions at marthastewart.com on how to make decorative eggs and wreaths that have a tailored look, using muted paint and trims. Metallic paint and glitter-coated eggs amp up the wow factor. There are tips too on using eggshells and egg cups as vases for diminutive bouquets of lily of the valley or pansies.

Glitter covered eggs

Pottery Barn has realistic speckled and robin's eggs that would make pretty filler for tabletop bowls and vases. There are lustre-finished glass eggs here, too, in soft yellow, pink and blue that would look smart on a grey or navy tablecloth or sleek lacquered console.

Mercury-glass pillar candle holders

Blue Mercury glass brings in one of the iconic pastel hues of the Easter season in a fresh new way. The candle holders are rendered in an interesting new shimmery pale blue. And there's an elegant silver-plated cake server embossed with a rabbit motif.

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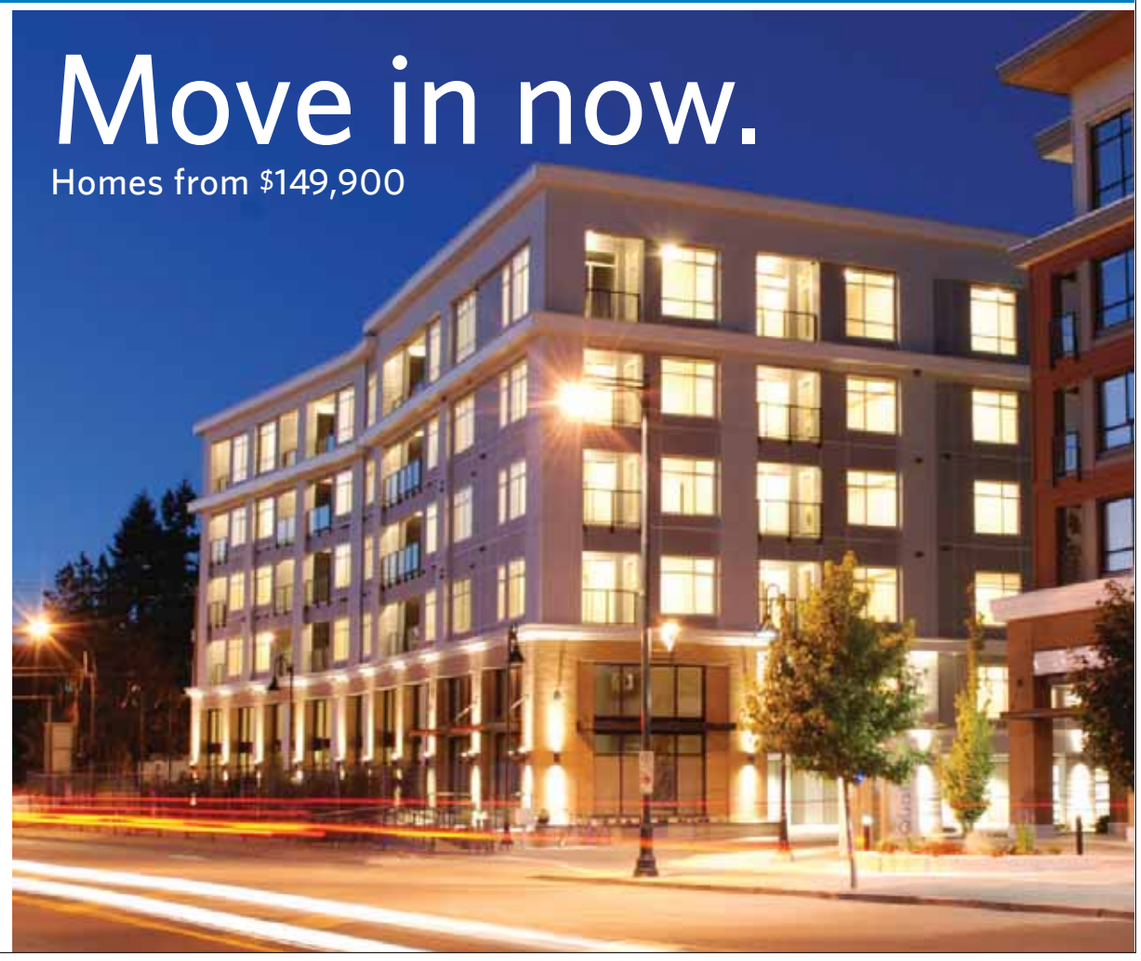

Bringing a tiny space into the future

This 1970's condo kitchen is ready to be brought into more modern times. PROVIDED

The tiny five-by-eight foot kitchen in my 1970's condo is in desperate need of an update, but the space is tiny! I'm hoping you can offer some suggestions to make it look modern and larger.
-Sylvia G, via email

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

The redeeming feature of your kitchen is the large window that lets in lots of light, so no matter how small your kitchen area might be it will never look dark.

Here are a few design tips and products that will help modernize your kitchen.

Keep the major elements, such as your stove, fridge and sink in the same areas and consider replacing/upgrading what you have now. That way you will not have to worry about complicated electrical or plumbing issues. I would flip the fridge and stove (simple electrical changes); that way, when you look into the kitchen the stove will offer you more visual depth into the room, making it look larger.

Appliances
Choose a 24-inch-wide fridge with a reflective stainless finish. The narrow fridges today come much taller and are counter depth for a fitted look. I would suggest replacing the stove with a two-burner counter cook top, then build in a micro-convection oven below. This will free up more counter space.

Cupboards
Since your kitchen is small but bright, I suggest a glossy door in a light colour. The glossy finish will reflect light and keep the small area bright. Consider adding a set of glass-fronted cabinet doors on the cupboards above the sink to add a break in the long row of cabinets and allow an attractive area for display.

Countertops
A stone countertop will give you two things: a high-end look for your kitchen and durability. I suggest choosing a countertop colour that blends the colours of your fridge/stove together. For instance, if you choose black appliances then choose a darker countertop. For stainless appliances, go for medium greyish tones and for white appliances go with light counters.

Backsplash and flooring
Your backsplash should marry your upper and lower cabinets together with its tone/colour. For instance, if you have white cabinetry then choose a white backsplash. For a room-expanding effect consider a mirrored backsplash. I like the grey/smoke mirror for a dramatic effect. This tends to look best when incorporating darker cupboards and counters into a kitchen. Your flooring should be a durable, non-gloss tile in a colour/tone that matches the new appliances you choose.

Lighting
Investing in under-cupboard lighting will add drama at night and allow you to use the kitchen without turning on the bright overhead light. Add a low-profile track light in a modern look to keep the overhead light fixture tight to the ceiling, this will make your ceilings appear taller.

Paint colour
If you want to make the room look large, make sure the gloss and paint on the walls match the cabinets. If you're dealing with a lighter tone, then paint the ceiling the same colour for consistency.

A tall, slim fridge with a stainless look can give a modern style even when only 24 inches wide. LG.COM

A white/grey fleck quartz counter adds a touch of luxury and durability. CAMBRIACANADA.COM

A small cooktop frees up counter space in a tiny kitchen. GEAPPLIANCES.CA

White glossy cabinetry helps to reflect light and keep a kitchen modern in its look. IKEA.COM

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Opening up your home for everybody? Make sure you think about your security. NEWSCANADA

Five tips for a safe open house event

Selling your home? Think about your safety as you prepare for the big day

Hosting an open house is an effective real estate sales tool that your agent will likely recommend, but how can you be sure your security will be kept in check?

"Ask your realtor questions about how to prepare for visitors," says Carla Bouchard, a broker with Royal LePage Metro. "Make sure that you understand what occurs during the open house and how to safeguard your possessions and your home."

Bouchard recommends the following five safety tips as you prepare for the event:

1. Put away items of value
Stow away items such as jewelry and family heirlooms.

Store prescription drugs in a location other than your medicine cabinets.

2. Ask your realtor if they plan to escort people through your home
By giving guided tours to one small group at a time, you won't lose track of the visitors.

3. Keep personal documents out of view
Documents containing financial or personal information should be put away to give you peace of mind when it comes to your privacy.

4. Take inventory of any remaining personal property
Make notes or take photographs of items that you were not able to store and share them with your Realtor prior to your open house.

5. Find out if visitors will be asked for identification.
Keeping a list of visitor information is not only a useful safety tip but also provides a list of prospects to follow up with.

An open house is an opportunity to market your investment to a wide range of potential buyers and it can be a rewarding experience if executed wisely.

NEWSCANADA

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WallPops add some pop to your home

Decor. Wall coverings can be used instead of wallpaper on windows and even on chandeliers

LINDA LABAN
Metro World News in Boston

Ready for a spring home spruce-up? Brewster Home Fashions' contemporary offshoot, WallPops, provides the ultimate in cheap and chic with its line of wall decals and DIY fixtures.

"The glory is anyone can do it without fear of getting it wrong," says Brewster's creative director, Paula Berberian.

Brewster is one of America's oldest independent, family-owned wall covering companies and spans five generations.

"There's no fuss, if you change your mind, you can change your design," she says. "For under 100 bucks, you can dramatically change a room with these products."

Decals

Forget wallpaper — use these self-adhering prints for a fun, graphic effect. "These are made in America with a technologically advanced micro-sphere adhesive," Berberian says. "They can be peeled off without harming paint and leave no sticky residue. So, it's not a huge commitment. Even if you have no artistic ability, you can choose a wall art kit and it'll look great."

Chandeliers

The finishing touch: bejewelled or fun chandeliers that fit over a standard fitting (the light bulb should not exceed 40 watts). "I've seen chandeliers over the years and really wanted to do a fun, trendy line," says Berberian. "These add a little glitz to a staid area. It can be whimsical or elegant and it serves a purpose — lighting."

WallPops is available online at wallpops.com.

Room panels

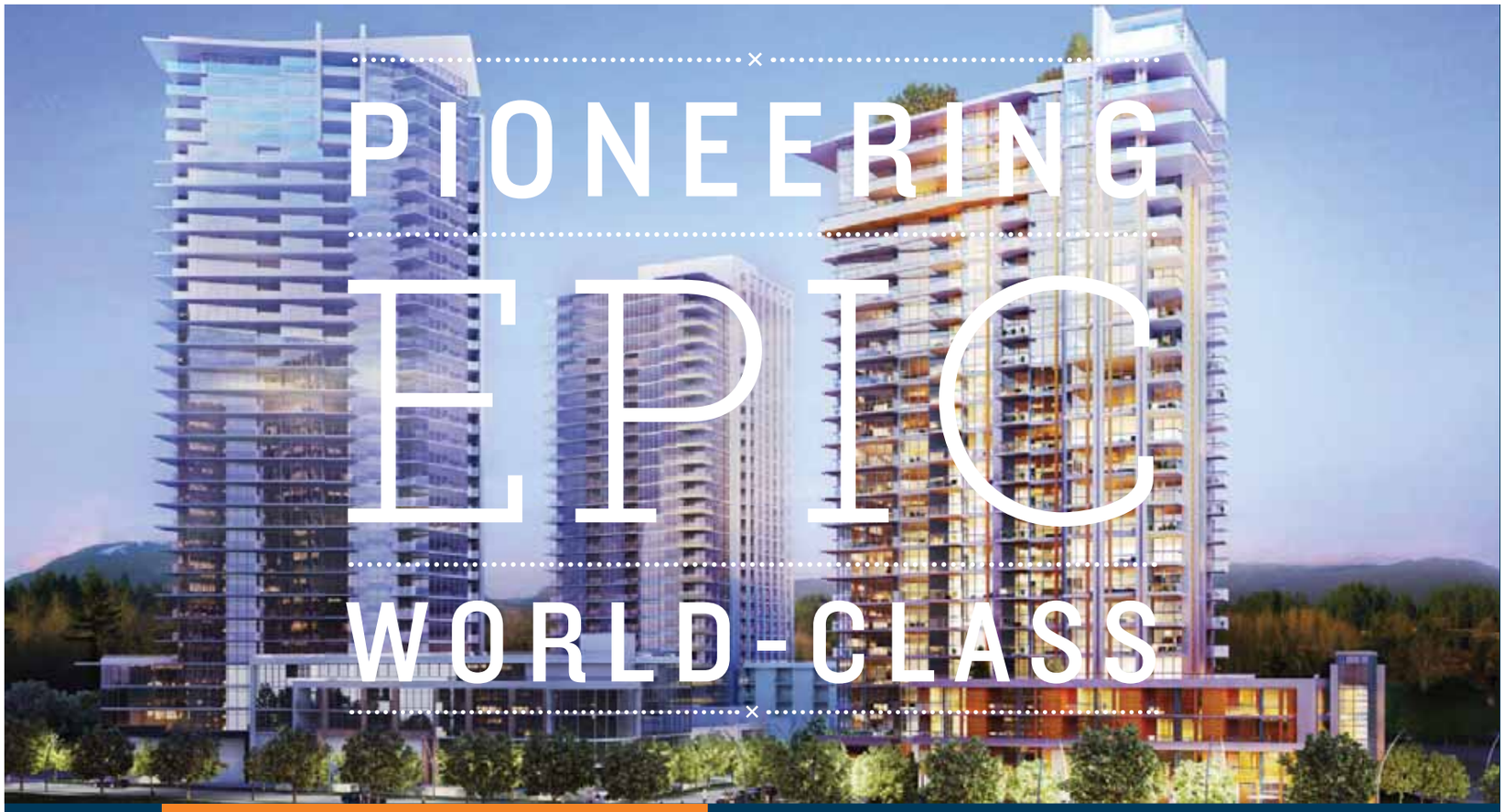
Add a few degrees of separation. These panels hang from a ceiling as a room partition, or from a window as an alternative to blinds and curtains. "These are lightweight and easy to hang. They define a space, or can be used on a wall to add dimension," Berberian says.

Window film

They're available in privacy film or decorative stained glass. "Use in a room with a window where you don't want a curtain, but want privacy," suggests Berberian. "The film can take up a whole window or just partial. The stained glass gives a very traditional look and is so expressive, but affordable."

Stained glass applique corners

"These can be used on windows, mirrors or cabinet corners," says Berberian. "There are no right or wrongs — use wherever you need a nice accent."



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Yo! Let's kick up your backyard style! Ice is back with a brand new season

DIY ideas. Harness your inner rapping renovator

Barbecue season is fast approaching and your backyard is probably looking a little shabby.

If you didn't get your visit to a tropical island this winter it's time to forget the Ice, Ice Baby and incorporate your vacation dreams into your backyard.

Get a few tips from Vanilla Ice, host of The Vanilla Ice Project.

Landscape

To create a vacation spot in your backyard, start with rich foliage, large leaves and colours. When visiting your local gardening store don't be afraid to go overboard with greenery. In addition to plants that will surround your yard with a lush atmosphere, choose some that will vine and climb on fences which will create more privacy and a feeling of escape in your own backyard.

Water features

There's nothing that can compare to the serene sound of running water. It will instantly bring an element of calm and relaxation to your backyard oasis.

Placing a waterfall within your newly planted garden sounds lovely and can be made even more esthetically pleasing by surrounding it with a stone walkway for traction.

Tiki torches

To add extra light around your yard, Tiki lamps are a great accessory.

Purchasing citronella candles to put into your Tiki torches will help build a shield against mosquitoes, allowing you to spend more time in your backyard after the sun goes down.

Vanilla Ice is back to help you make the most of your backyard space. HANDOUT

Fire pit

Building a fire pit will allow you to spend much more time in your new backyard — not only longer into the evenings but also at the beginning and end of the summer, when nights can be cooler.

A fire pit also opens up the possibilities for outdoor activities like roasting marshmallows and hotdogs.

Canopies

Create a picture perfect backyard worthy of a magazine spread by adding a canopy over the generic stylings of tables, chairs and benches.

The option of a canopy-enclosed day bed is also a great touch, especially if you are lucky enough to have a pool in your backyard.

They instantly add movie star appeal to your outdoor style. Canopies bring a feeling of romance and luxury while dining outdoors or lying away from the sun while enjoying the summer breeze blowing through the drapes over you.

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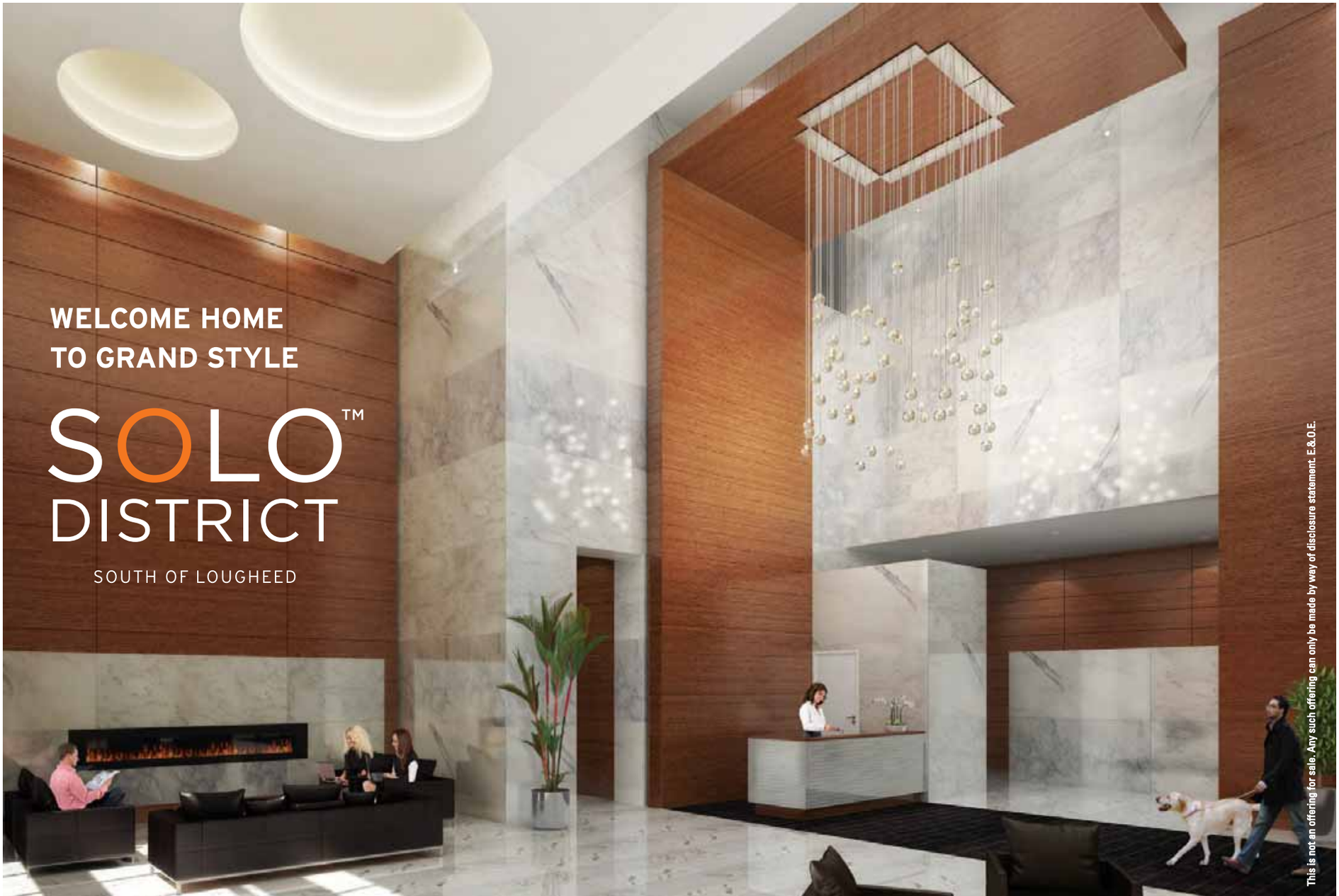
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Live on the curly pasta edge with Sicilian-inspired Lamb Ragu

This is one of Nigella Lawson's go-to weeknight suppers. She says you can cook the ragu longer at a lower heat, if desired, but it's also perfect as is.

This recipe calls for pappardelle — those egg-rich, wide ribbons — but you can use whatever type of pasta you have on hand.

"Ragout" is French, "ragu" Italian, and this meat sauce is inspired by the Sicilian combination of sweet lamb, dried wild mint and crushed chili flakes, though Lawson said she has added an Anglo note with a little red currant jelly.

Ingredients

- 22 ml (1 1/2 tbsp) garlic-infused olive oil
- 1 banana shallot, chopped
- 5 ml (1 tsp) dried mint
- 5 ml (1 tsp) oregano
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) crushed red pepper flakes
- 250 g (8 oz) ground lamb
- 1 can (398 ml/14 oz) diced tomatoes
- 10 ml (2 tsp) red currant jelly
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) Worcestershire sauce
- Pinch salt, plus more for pasta water
- Freshly ground pepper
- 250 g (8 oz) pappardelle
- Handful fresh mint, to garnish (optional)

1. Put a large pan of water on to boil for the pasta and warm garlic oil in a small, heavy-based pan that comes with a lid; cook shallots, stirring for a minute or so.

2. Sprinkle in mint, oregano and red pepper flakes, stirring again in hot pan before adding meat. Cook for a couple of minutes, stirring to break it up with a wooden spatula or spoon, until it loses a bit of its pinkness.

3. Add tomatoes, red currant jelly, Worcestershire sauce, salt and some grindings of pepper, then give a good stir and bring to a bubble. Partially cover with the lid and simmer for 20 minutes.

4. At the appropriate time, salt the boiling water and cook pasta according to package instructions, making sure to check for readiness a couple of minutes before it's supposed to be done. Once cooked and not-too-efficiently drained, return pasta to pan and dress with lamb ragu.

5. Sprinkle a little bit of fresh mint onto each bowl, if desired, to serve. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ NIGELLISSIMA: EASY ITALIAN-INSPIRED RECIPES BY NIGELLA LAWSON (KNOPF CANADA, 2013).**

Curly-Edged Pasta With Lamb Ragu

This recipe serves two. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cookbook of the Week

Flavours of Italy

In her book Nigellissima: Easy Italian-Inspired Recipes, Nigella Lawson offers up dishes that don't require inaccessible ingredients or techniques. That's because Nigellissima shows readers how a weeknight dish can be a faithful (and delicious) interpretation of traditional Italian fares.

Included are recipes like Italian Roast Chicken with Peppers and Olives; Shortcut Sausage Meatballs; Spaghetti with Tuna, Lemon and Arugula; Nutella Cheesecake, and more. **METRO**

Indulge without dairy and gluten: Choco-Olive Oil Cake

Nigella Lawson said she made this cake for a friend who had been diagnosed with celiac disease.

It's also dairy and gluten-free. It's "very, very easy."

The cake is delicious served warm, with some berries on the side, as well as a dollop of mascarpone or ice cream. It can also be served cool.

Ingredients

- 150 ml (2/3 cup) regular olive oil (plus more for greasing)
- 90 ml (6 tbsp) good-quality unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) boiling water
- 10 ml (2 tsp) best vanilla extract
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) almond meal (flour) or 175 ml (3/4 cup) plus 15 ml (1 tbsp) all-purpose flour
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) baking soda
- Pinch salt
- 250 ml (1 cup) superfine sugar
- 3 eggs

1. Heat oven to 160 C (325 F). Grease a 23-cm (9-inch) springform pan with oil and line base with baking parchment.

2. Measure and sift cocoa powder into bowl and whisk in boiling water until you have a smooth, chocolatey, still runny paste. Whisk in vanilla, then set aside to cool a little.

3. In another smallish bowl, combine almond meal with baking soda and salt.

4. Put sugar, olive oil and eggs into bowl of freestanding mixer with paddle attachment and beat vigorously 3 minutes until you have a pale-primrose, aerated and thickened cream.

5. Turn speed down a little and pour in cocoa mix, beating as you go, and when all is scraped in, you can slowly tip in almond meal mixture.

6. Scrape down, and stir with a spatula, then pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 45 minutes or until sides set and very centre, on top, still looks slightly damp. A cake tester should come up mainly clean but with a few sticky chocolate crumbs clinging to it.

7. Let cool 10 minutes on a wire rack, still in its pan, and then ease sides of the cake with metal spatula and spring it out of the pan.

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WHL

Giants hold first-overall pick in 2013 bantam draft

The Vancouver Giants will have the first-overall pick in this spring's Western Hockey League Bantam Draft — a fact that was solidified after Wednesday's draft lottery.

The Giants, who finished with a league-worst 21-49-2-0 record, are not going to part ways with that pick, either.

The first-overall pick is what Giants executive vice-president and general manager Scott Bonner called a "rainbow" at the end of a tough season.

The Giants go into the May 2 draft with two first-round selections — the first- and 20th-overall picks.

The Giants' management met with the ownership last summer and forged a plan to rebuild their franchise using the draft.

"I think we're just going back to the formula that worked once upon a time and hopefully we have the same results it did the first go-around," Bonner said.

Tyler Benson of the SSAC Southgate Lions in the Alberta Major Bantam Hockey League appears to be the consensus top pick after posting 57 goals and 146 points in 33 games played this season.

Benson also stands five-foot-11 and 180 pounds, so he's got the size to match the skill.

"He's obviously going to get strong consideration," said Bonner.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Vancouver Canucks forward Daniel Sedin moves in on St. Louis Blues goalie Jake Allen at Rogers Arena on Tuesday night. Sedin scored for the first time in nine games during the contest. DARRYL DYCK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canucks look to get offensive vs. Coyotes

NHL. Two teams struggling to light lamp

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

Games between the Vancouver Canucks and Phoenix Coyotes rarely, if ever, come advertised as showcases for tantalizing creativity, end-to-end play or just scoring in general.

Based on recent evidence from both sides, expect nothing different on Thursday when the two teams meet.

The Coyotes wrapped up a four-game road trip on Tuesday night, scoring twice in a losing cause to the L.A. Kings.

Before Tuesday, Phoenix had gone three games without a goal, which actually amounted to 245 minutes and 33 seconds of shutout hockey over the span of five games.

The Canucks, coming off a 3-2 win over the St. Louis Blues, which was just their sixth win in the past 17 games, have scored more than two goals in a hockey game only three times since the beginning of March.

Perhaps the Canucks can build momentum from the fact that Daniel Sedin, the team's most dangerous scoring threat, found the back of the net for the first time in nine games on Tuesday night.

"He was, in my opinion anyway, getting some chances, he was doing the right things," head coach Alain Vigneault said. "Sometimes you're going to go through some of these stretches but he stayed real positive. He kept working real hard, he was real good with his teammates and it was just a matter of time."

Thursday's game against the Coyotes begins a three-game road trip for the Canucks.

They leave Vancouver sitting sixth in the Western Conference. The Canucks trail the Minnesota Wild by two points for top spot in the Northwest Division, after the Wild defeated the Detroit Red Wings on Wednesday.

Desert drought

245

The Phoenix Coyotes recently went 245 minutes and 33 seconds without scoring a goal. That stretch spanned five games, ending on Tuesday against the L.A. Kings.

4 SPORTS

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Canucks looking bad and maybe that's a good thing

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Edward Fraser
vancouver@metronews.ca

The Canucks have had a rocky, injury-ravaged road through the lockout-shortened season, but as Vancouver fans know, winning the Presidents' Trophy isn't everything. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Canucks are coming off a game against St. Louis that served as a microcosm of their season to this point: Terrible start, impressive stretch, struggle-to-survive ending. In 29 games, this team has worn as many masks as Roberto Luongo. When will the disguise come off for the big reveal? Unfortunately for the team and its followers, not for another month, at least.

The Sedins are Vancouver's best players, but it's Ryan Kesler, out with a broken foot sustained in late February, who stirs the drink. Until he's back — initial reports were he'd be out as long as six weeks — and fully acclimatized into the lineup, there can be no real gauge on whether this club is the viable Stanley Cup contender from the past two seasons or just a member of the 11-team wash in the wake of the Blackhawks and Ducks.

With only 18 games remaining after Thursday's tilt against the Phoenix Coyotes, a team outside the West's playoff picture but only four points back of Vancouver, there isn't a lot of time for the Canucks to figure things out and get the regular season on track. Luckily for them, and sadly for fans in general, there isn't any rush.

Playoff seeding has become all but meaningless in this age of parity. Over the past three seasons, teams with home-ice advantage in a playoff series have just a .533 winning percentage, coming out on top in 24 of 45 series.

As the Los Angeles Kings proved last season, winning it all — at the expense of the Canucks in Round 1 — as the No. 8 seed, just getting in, and getting on a roll, is what's needed to win a Stanley Cup.

And a great way to get hot and stay hot is to have a man between the pipes who can steal games when the team in front of him is struggling. The Canucks have two men more than capable of such a feat. It's up to the brass to decide over the days leading to the April 3 trade deadline whether doubling down on that possibility or finding a No. 3 centre is more important.

NBA. Heat handle Cavaliers' best to extend winning streak to 24

LeBron James scored 25 points as the Miami Heat overcame a 27-point deficit in the third quarter and won their 24th straight game, 98-95 over the short-handed Cleveland Cavaliers on Wednesday night to extend the second-longest winning streak in NBA history.

The Heat are within nine games of matching the record of 33 consecutive wins held by the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers.

James and his teammates have insisted the record isn't one of their goals, and for more than 30 minutes the defending champions seemed disinterested and on the verge of losing for the first time since Feb. 1. Miami trailed 67-40 with 7:44 left in the third quarter.

But behind the irrepressible James, who added 12 rebounds and 10 assists, the Heat inched closer to history by matching the biggest comeback in the NBA this season, according to STATS.

Miami Heat forward LeBron James makes a pass over Cavaliers defenders on Wednesday night in Cleveland. GETTY IMAGES

James had 14 points in the fourth as Miami completed its second straight comeback. The Heat rallied from 17 down — 13 in the fourth quarter — to beat Boston 105-103 Monday night and snap a tie with the 2007-08 Houston Rockets for the second-longest winning streak in NBA history. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro

Kamloops' Olynyk centres March Madness

Kelly Olynyk, the Kamloops basketball product now plying his trade with Gonzaga University, the top-ranked college hoops team in the U.S., has made it to the cover of Sports Illustrated.

Surrounded by Bulldogs fans, Olynyk is the focal point on one of four regional covers of the famed magazine, which came out Wednesday in advance of NCAA March Madness.

Olynyk, who ranked fifth in the West Coast Conference in average scoring at 17.5 points per game, and Gonzaga will play Southern University Thursday in the second round. SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

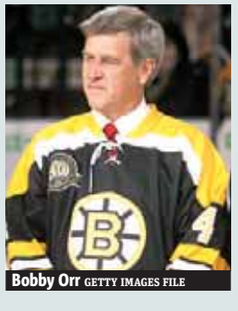
NHL

The Great No. 4 Orr turns 65

Bobby Orr, the man who revolutionized the defenceman position and one of the greatest hockey players of all time, turned 65 years old on Wednesday.

Orr played in 12 NHL seasons, mostly with the Boston Bruins before finishing his career with the Chicago Blackhawks. His remarkable career was sadly cut short due to knee injuries and knee surgery.

His individual awards were astonishing — eight Norris Trophy wins as the NHL's best defenceman and a Conn Smythe Trophy winner in 1970 and 1972 as the playoff MVP in the Bruins' two Stanley Cup victories, among others. METRO



Bobby Orr GETTY IMAGES FILE

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Friends say you can do no wrong but for one reason or another you don't entirely believe them. Maybe you should reserve judgment until you feel more positive about yourself. When will that be? Any moment now.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You live by certain standards but you cannot expect everyone else to live by them too. Sometimes, you can be a bit too judgmental. The planets warn that the person you judge today could be the one judging you tomorrow.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Do you commit yourself to a course of action that could boost your reputation or do you play safe and leave things just as they are? You were born to take chances.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Everything you touch will turn out just right today. But don't get carried away as the planets warn your gains could be wiped out if you push your luck too far. Know when to stop.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
The only pressure you will feel today is the pressure you choose to put on yourself. Whatever your problems, push them to one side and focus only on things that make you happy.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You seem to be on the verge of accepting some kind of deal, and it certainly looks good. But appearances can be deceptive and the planets warn you should wait a day or two.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
By all means, tell the truth today but expect some kind of backlash for your honesty. Other people will not be happy if you point out their failings, so ask yourself: Is it really worth opening my mouth?

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Even if you are following a path you have taken before, you could fall on your face today. That does not mean you should stay home — just watch where you put your feet!

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You may be confident that a scheme of some kind cannot fail but don't expect too much of it right away. The omens are good for the long-term but in the short-term there may be one or two setbacks.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You believe in telling it as you see it, which is good. But some people can be super sensitive to criticism, so don't overdo it. Tone down your comments a bit today so you are less likely to get a negative reaction.

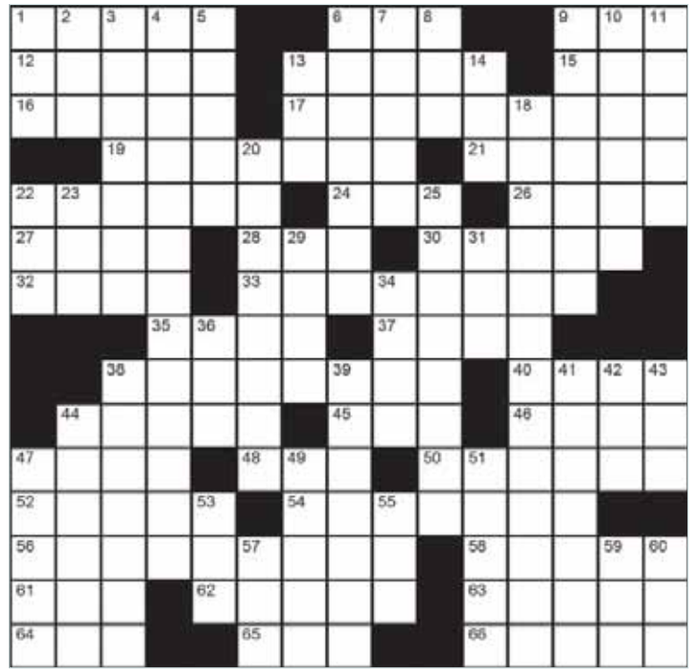
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Some people prefer to get others to help them rather than do things for themselves and one such person is beginning to annoy you. Let them know in no uncertain terms that you will no longer indulge their laziness.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may be tempted to ditch a project that has already been started and begin all over again but is that truly necessary? No, it's not. It will come out right.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

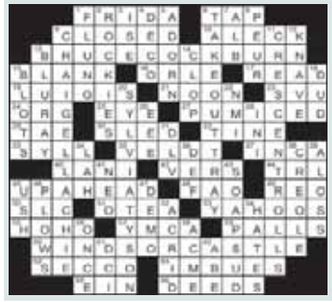
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Ms. Lake of TV talk
6. Inc., in England
9. Booker T.'s backup
12. Walk _ __ line
13. __ corn: 2 wds.
15. Queen's "We __ the Champions"
16. "You can __ _ horse to water..."
17. Seth Rogen flick, with The: 2 wds.
19. Connecting-stuff-to-a-PC spot, _ _ _ ___
21. Wander
22. Spa treatment
24. "The Addams Family" cousin
26. 911 respondents
27. Secret __. (Alias)
28. Dined
30. Roy __, Robert Redford's "The Natural" (1984) role
32. Ernie's muppet friend
33. Fajita need
35. Crown getter
37. Latin hymn: "Dies __"
38. Back together
40. Face part
44. Jacket sported by a '60s rocker
45. Ex-Bruin Bobby
46. Honeymaker's home
47. _ ___ _ (Edmonton sch.)
48. Chairman in The Beatles' "Revolution"
50. Spoke from the podium
52. Fishhook line
54. Beavers, whilst using their teeth
56. Toronto-based romance novel publisher
58. "Going to _ __-__" by Smokey Robinson & The Miracles
61. Scot's uncle
62. Kelly Clarkson's "Since _ __ Gone"
63. Camping needs
64. Riddle-me-__
65. "Hiss!"
66. Toronto football players, to fans

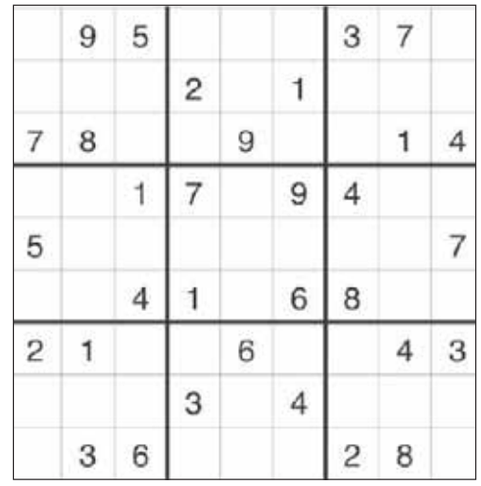
Down
1. Singer Mr. Donner
2. 'Favour' suffix
3. The Canterbury†Tales writer
4. Canuck sketch comedy troupe: The __: 4 wds.
5. "Dancing with the Stars" judge Carrie Ann
6. Sir Wilfrid __
7. Country singer, Travis __
8. Cdn. currency
9. Xylophone-like instrument
10. Defrauds
11. Sevens: French
13. Inflated id
14. Bouquet delivery co.
18. "Brand New Low" band from Sault Ste. Marie: 2 wds.
20. "Doesn't Really Matter" by __ Blonde
22. Little lie
23. 'Lemon' suffix
25. Fairly-near-the-stage area: 2 wds.
29. Ms. Spelling
31. 'Pay' suffix
34. Level
36. Italy's li'l locale
38. Sports official
39. Two-dollar coins
41. NYC's Brill Building output: 2 wds.
42. "__ Got a Feeling" by The Beatles
43. Heath Ledger/Orlando Bloom movie, "__ Kelly" (2003)
44. Generic grocery store brand: 2 wds.
47. One-named male vocalist
49. Chills
51. Ranch in "Giant" (1956)
53. Currency in Romania
55. Ms. Jillian
57. Some CFL players
59. Ronny & The Daytonas smash
60. Old spy gr.

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

1	9	8	3	4	6	2	5	7
4	7	6	5	2	1	8	3	9
3	5	2	7	8	9	1	4	6
8	3	7	9	5	2	6	1	4
2	4	5	6	1	7	3	9	8
6	1	9	4	3	8	7	2	5
9	6	3	1	7	4	5	8	2
5	2	4	8	6	3	9	7	1
7	8	1	2	9	5	4	6	3

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Friday 7°/2° Mainly sunny
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2749 Main St.
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Fraserway Place
Sevenoaks Shopping Centre
2140 Sumas Way
2142 Clearbrook Rd.
2602 Mt. Lehman Rd.
32915 South Fraser Way

Aldergrove
26310 Fraser Hwy.

Burnaby
Brentwood Mall
Crystal Square
Lougheed Mall
Metropolis at Metrotown
3855 Henning Dr.
4501 North Rd.
4711 Kingsway

Chilliwack
Cottonwood Mall
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7544 Vedder Rd.
45300 Luckakuck Way

Coquitlam
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3000 Lougheed Hwy.
3278 Westwood St.

Delta
Scottsdale Centre
1517 56th St.
4841 Delta St.
4912 62nd St.
7235 120th St.

Langley
Willowbrook Mall
8840 210th St.
19638 Fraser Hwy.
19700 Langley Bypass
20159 88th Ave.
20202 66th Ave.

Maple Ridge
Haney Place Mall
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